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# PRIVATE

# CORRESPONDENCE

OF

# WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

LONDON
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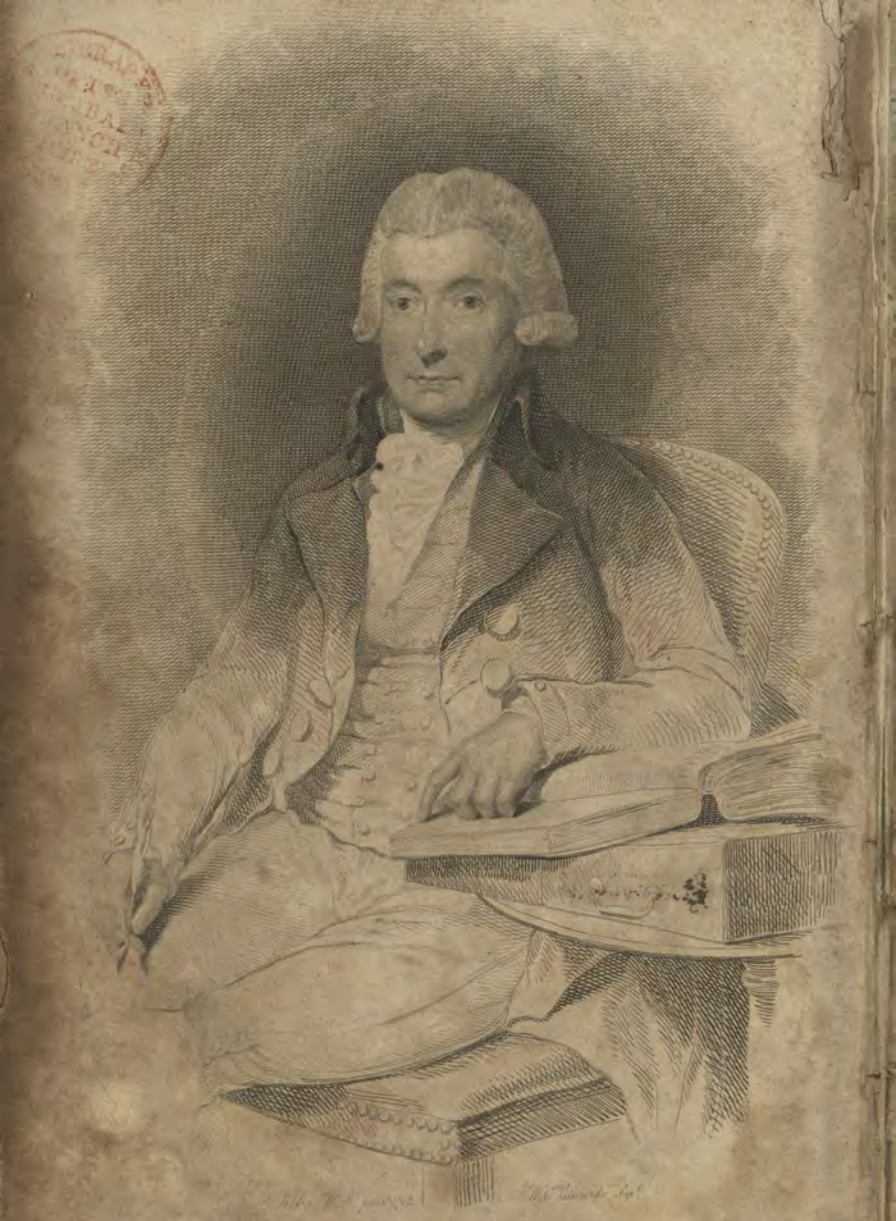

WILLIAM COWPER ESQ.

J. C. M. C. 1. M.

# PRIVATE

# CORRESPONDENCE

OF

# WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

WITH SEVERAL OF

HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS

IN THE POSSESSION OF HIS KINSMAN,

JOHN JOHNSON, LL.D.

RECTOR OF YAXHAM WITH WELBORNE IN NORFOLK.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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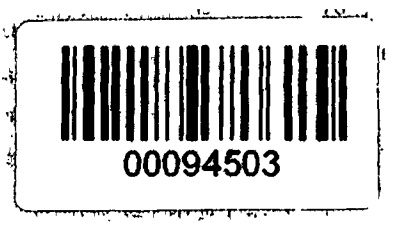

TO

JOSEPH FOSTER BARHAM, ESQ.

---

ALLOW me, dear Sir, in presenting to the Public these hitherto unprinted Letters of the poet Cowper, to indulge my privilege as an Editor, and the personal feelings by which I am actuated towards yourself, by inscribing them to you. The interest attached to the name of COWPER will, I trust, render this tribute of respect not unacceptable; while it gratifies me highly to have thus an opportunity of assuring you of the grateful regard and sincere esteem with which I subscribe myself,

My dear Sir,

your obliged and

affectionate friend,

J. JOHNSON.

Yaxham Parsonage, December 10, 1823.

*Lately Published,*

MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

THE FRIEND AND BIOGRAPHER OF COWPER,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Handsomely printed in 2 vols. 4to. with Portraits; Price 4*l.* 4*s.* bds.

# PREFACE

## BY THE EDITOR.

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THE idea of this publication first occurred to me, on perusing some letters of Cowper to his estimable friend Mr. Hill, which had not appeared in Mr. Hayley's Life of him. It struck me, that, with the aid of a few from other sources, I might be able to present the public with an additional collection of those admired productions. Through the kindness of the Rev. Thomas Bull, Mrs. Unwin, Mrs. Smith, and the Rev. Professor Martyn, I was soon supplied with materials for that agreeable undertaking; for which I beg leave to offer them my grateful acknowledgments. To Mrs. Hill I am especially indebted; her obliging communication of the letters above

mentioned having eventually led to my acquisition of the others.

As the letters in the present Volumes are addressed to the same persons (with the exception of Mrs. King) as those in the former, it may be needless to observe that they were equally submitted to the selecting hand of Mr. Hayley. But, lest the reader should suspect, that, having cropped the flower of the collection, my lamented friend, the biographer, has left me only refuse to present to him, I am desirous of interposing a few remarks in their favour.

By far the greater part of them are of a lively description, exhibiting frequent marks of that playful humour which is so peculiar to the letters of Cowper, and of which Mr. Hayley has preserved so many specimens in the former volumes. That, indeed, is the only ground on which I can account for his suppres-

sion of several that will be found in the following pages. It was necessary to observe a measure, in the admission of letters into his biographical work, and not to insert all which he might otherwise approve, lest the narrative should be overborne by the epistolary part of his publication. At the same time I am ready to concede, that there are some letters, especially in the early part of this collection, which were probably rejected as comparatively trifling. But as these have all, more or less, some characteristic turn, either of thought or expression, I have ventured to introduce them to the reader's notice.

A few, and but a few, are of a political nature. The subjects, however, of these had so long ceased to interest the public, that, having preserved some of a similar description, it was not likely that Mr. Hayley should be tempted to multiply them. But as the reader may be curious to know more of what Cowper thought

of the men and measures of those times, than his biographer has furnished, I have ventured to insert them; especially, as I wish this collection to have, as much as may be, the air, both as to opinions and events, of a supplementary life of the writer.

And lastly, there are many letters addressed to Mr. Newton, with two or three to Mr. Bull, on the subject of religion; which, though not of general application, but confined to its aspect on the mind of the writer, were decidedly worthy of Mr. Hayley's insertion; and the more so, indeed, on that very account; his concern, as biographer, being rather with the individual than the community. But these, out of tenderness to the feelings of the reader, I am persuaded, and for the gloominess they attach to the writer's mind, he has utterly excluded. In doing this, however, amiable and considerate as his caution must appear, the gloominess which he has taken from the mind

of Cowper, has the effect of involving his character in obscurity. People read "the Letters" with "the Task" in their recollection, (and vice versâ,) and are perplexed. They look for the Cowper of each, in the other, and find him not. The correspondency is destroyed. Hence the character of Cowper is undetermined; mystery hangs over it; and the opinions formed of him are as various as the minds of the enquirers. That I am not singular in deducing these consequences from the suppression of the gloomy, but, in many instances, strikingly pious passages, restored in the present Volumes, I am warranted to assert, on the authority of a highly esteemed friend, a man justly valued for his attainments in theological knowledge, and extensively acquainted with the state of religious opinions.* In alluding to these suppressed letters, he emphatically says, "Cowper will never be clearly and satis-

* The Rev. Legh Richmond.

factorily understood without them, and they should be permitted to exist, for the demonstration of the case. I know the importance of it, from numerous conversations I have had, both in Scotland and England, on this most interesting subject. Persons of truly religious principles, as well as those of little or no religion at all, have greatly erred in their estimate of this great and good man."

Having thus bespoke the reader's attention to these restored letters of Cowper to Mr. Newton, on the ground of their illustrative tendency, I would engage it still further, from a consideration of their beauty. And here I account myself particularly fortunate, in being favoured with the opinion of confessedly one of the best judges of composition that this country has to boast — the Rev. Robert Hall, of Leicester. In a letter addressed to me, on the nineteenth of August of the present year, he writes thus:

" It is quite unnecessary to say that I perused the letters with great admiration and delight. I have always considered the letters of Mr. Cowper as the finest specimen of the epistolary stile in our language; and *these* appear to me of a superior description to the former, possessing as much beauty with more piety and pathos. To an air of inimitable ease and carelessness, they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. I have scarcely found a single word which is capable of being exchanged for a better.

* * * * *

" Literary errors I can discern none. The selection of words and the structure of the periods are inimitable; they present as striking a contrast as can well be conceived, to the turgid verbosity which passes at present for fine writing, and which bears a great resemblance to the degeneracy which marks the stile

of Ammianus Marcellinus, as compared to that of Cicero or of Livy. A perpetual effort and struggle is made to supply the place of vigour, garish and dazzling colours are substituted for chaste ornament, and the hideous distortions of weakness for native strength. In my humble opinion, the study of Cowper's prose may, on this account, be as useful in forming the taste of young people as his poetry."

* * * * *

"That the letters will afford great delight to all persons of true taste, and that you will confer a most acceptable present on the reading world by publishing them, will not admit of a doubt."

To this testimony to the merits of the epistolary stile of Cowper from so high an authority, it would be the extreme of presumption in me to add a syllable. There is one subject, however, connected, if not with the composition, yet with the matter of these letters to

Mr. Newton, to which I would beg to call a few minutes' attention;—the aberration of mind which they so painfully develope. To this was indisputably owing all the gloominess of the character of Cowper: a point which I am the more anxious to establish, as it has been erroneously charged on his religious opinions. But no—the unhappiness of this amiable man is to be referred to the cause already stated; and that again, to an excess of hypochondriacal affection, induced, in the first instance, as I have repeatedly heard a deceased friend of his and mine observe, by his having, in very early life, improperly checked an erysipelatous complaint of the face; which rendered him ever after liable to depression of spirits. Under the influence of one of these attacks, attended with evident mental obliquity, he was impressed with an idea, originating in a supposed voice from heaven, that the Author of his life had recalled the loan. This was rapidly followed by another, to this effect;—That as he had

failed to restore it, in the intervening moment, the punishment of his disobedience would be everlasting destruction.

Now, I would ask those who have inadvertently charged the unhappiness of this pitiable sufferer on his religious opinions, to the operation of what theological tenets they can warrantably ascribe the supposition, not only of so preposterous a demand, but of a denunciation, under such circumstances, more preposterous still, as referred to the Supreme Being? —It will be readily conceded, I trust, that, as no known system of divinity can be justly charged with such absurd principles as the above supposition would imply, so that which Cowper adopted, (whatever it might be,) and through the influence of which on his divine poem "The Task" he obtained the high eulogium of being

"With more than painter's fancy blest, with lays
Holy as saints to heav'n expiring raise,"*

* Pursuits of Literature.

unquestionably cannot. And if this be granted, his unhappiness must undoubtedly be referred solely to his aberration of mind.*

Having conscientiously endeavoured, however feebly, to exculpate the religious opinions of Cowper from the charge of originating his mental distress, I am anxious to anticipate an important question, in reference to the desponding letters. Am I not afraid, it may be asked, lest, in affording an indiscriminate inspection into the gloomy interior of Cowper's mind, I should minister to the melancholy contemplations of some depressed spirit, and thus eventually assimilate it to his own? I answer, I should indeed fear it, but for the circumstance already mentioned; the striking irregularity of the writer's intellect on the subject of his own salvability. This is the frame, if I may so

† See more on this subject in the Sketch of the Life of Cowper, prefixed to the third volume of his Poems, 8vo edit. p. 17—12mo. p. 19.

express it, in which all his gloomy pictures are *conspicuously set;* and as they cannot be separated, they must be transferred, both or neither, to the mind of another. But as experience teaches me that insanity is not transferable, so I set my heart at rest as to a transfer of the gloom, which in this case resulted from it.

Should the eye, therefore, of any desponding person meet the letters alluded to, whilst he remembers the circumstances under which they were written, let him, in the exercise of the virtues, and genuine though gloomy piety which they exhibit, anticipate a happy issue, sooner or later, out of all his afflictions, through the same Hand which delivered Cowper,

> Though sunk "beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he."*

On casting my eye over one of the former

* See the affecting lines, entitled "The Castaway."—Cowper's Poems, vol. iii.

volumes, I discovered that I had accidentally sent a letter to the press which was already before the public. I was led into this mistake through the inaccuracy either of Mr. Hayley's amanuensis, or his printer, in regard to dates. Not finding it under its real one of February 6, 1781, I naturally concluded that it had not been printed; but it afterwards appeared, though too late to be recalled, under July 6 of the same year. It might have been expected, indeed, that, having myself edited the volumes alluded to, I should have been aware of its previous insertion; but the truth is, the manuscript letters being as familiar to me as the published, and undistinguished in my mind, in preparing the former for the press, I depended wholly on the dates of the latter.

But for the above detection, I should have been betrayed into similar repetitions afterwards. I trust, however, that through the watchfulness it excited, the duplicate abovementioned will prove a solitary instance.

From this and other causes, the editing these letters has been a work of labour to me; but it has been a pleasant one. It has recalled to my recollection times and places, long past and lost sight of, but never to be forgotten; and by the help of an elegant little volume, in which the scenery about Olney and Weston is faithfully delineated, has, at intervals, almost beguiled me into an imagination that I was still there, and my revered relative with me.*

Having exercised the mind of the reader with recitals not of the most enlivening tone, I may have thereby unfitted it for an entrance on the sprightly letters at the commencement of these volumes. As a prelude, therefore, to those playful epistolary specimens, I will present him with one which, for an obvious reason, I could not introduce into the work itself, but which may find an appropriate insertion here.

---

* "The Rural Walks of Cowper." By J. and H. S. Storer, Pentonville.

It not only shews, as my obliging friend Mr. Hall observed to me, "how gracefully the author could trifle, but displays a pleasing wildness of imagination." It is of an older date than any of the other letters, having been written when Cowper was a young man in the Temple, as a contribution to the "Nonsense Club," of which he reminds Mr. Hill in the former collection, and of which themselves, Bonnel Thornton, Lloyd, and the elder Colman, were members.*

---

LETTER FROM AN OWL TO A BIRD OF PARADISE.

SIR,

I have lately been under some uneasiness at your silence, and began to fear that our friends in Paradise were not so well as I could wish; but I was told yesterday that the

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* Vol. ii. letter 222.

pigeon you employed as a carrier, after having been long pursued by a hawk, found it necessary to drop your letter, in order to facilitate her escape. I send you this by the claws of a distant relation of mine, an eagle, who lives on the top of a neighbouring mountain. The nights being short at this time of the year, my epistle will probably be so too; and it strains my eyes not a little to write, when it is not as dark as pitch. I am likewise much distressed for ink: the blackberry juice which I had bottled up having been all exhausted, I am forced to dip my beak in the blood of a mouse, which I have just caught; and it is so very savoury, that I think in my heart I swallow more than I expend in writing. A monkey who lately arrived in these parts, is teaching me and my eldest daughter to dance. The motion was a little uneasy to us at first, as he taught us to stretch our wings wide, and to turn out our toes; but it is easier now. I, in particular, am a tolerable proficient in a hornpipe, and can foot it very nimbly with a switch

tucked under my left wing, considering my years and infirmities. As you are constantly gazing at the sun, it is no wonder that you complain of a weakness in your eyes; how should it be otherwise, when mine are none of the strongest, though I always draw the curtains over them as soon as he rises, in order to shut out as much of his light as possible? We have had a miserable dry season, and my ivy-bush is sadly out of repair. I shall be obliged to you if you will favour me with a shower or two, which you can easily do, by driving a few clouds together over the wood, and beating them about with your wings till they fall to pieces. I send you some of the largest berries the bush has produced, for your children to play withal. A neighbouring physician, who is a goat of great experience, says they will cure the worms; so if they should chance to swallow them, you need not be frightened. I have lately had a violent fit of the pip, which festered my rump to a prodigious degree. I have shed almost every feather in my tail, and must not

hope for a new pair of breeches till next spring; so shall think myself happy if I escape the chin-cough, which is generally very rife in moulting season.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

MADGE.

P. S.—I hear my character as first minister is a good deal censured; but "Let them censure; what care I?"

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# PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

# WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

---

## TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Huntingdon, July 3, 1765.

Whatever you may think of the matter, it is no such easy thing to keep house for two people. A man cannot always live like the lions in the Tower; and a joint of meat, in so small a family, is an endless incumbrance. In short, I never knew how to pity poor housekeepers before; but now I cease to wonder at that politic cast which their occupation usually gives to their countenance, for it is really a matter full of perplexity.

I have received but one visit since here I came. I don't mean that I have refused any, but that only one has been offered. This was from my woollen-draper; a very healthy, wealthy, sensible, sponsible man, and extremely civil. He has a cold bath, and has promised me a key of it, which I shall probably make use of in the winter. He has undertaken, too, to get me the St. James's Chronicle three times a-week, and to shew me Hinchinbrook House, and to do every service for me in his power; so that I did not exceed the truth, you see, when I spoke of his civility. Here is a card-assembly, and a dancing-assembly, and a horse-race, and a club, and a bowling-green, so that I am well off, you perceive, in point of diversions; especially as I shall go to 'em, just as much as I should if I lived a thousand miles off. But no matter for that; the spectator at a play is more entertained than the actor; and in real life it is much the same. You will say, perhaps, that if I never frequent these places, I

shall not come within the description of a spectator; and you will say right. I have made a blunder, which shall be corrected in the next edition.

You are old dog at a bad tenant; witness all my uncle's and your mother's geese and gridirons. There is something so extremely impertinent in entering upon a man's premises, and using them without paying for 'em, that I could easily resent it if I would. But I rather choose to entertain myself with thinking how you will scour the man about, and worry him to death, if once you begin with him. Poor toad! I leave him entirely to your mercy.

My dear Joe, you desire me to write long letters—I have neither matter enough, nor perseverance enough for the purpose. However, if you can but contrive to be tired of reading as soon as I am tired of writing, we shall find

that short ones answer just as well; and, in my opinion, this is a very practicable measure.

My friend Colman has had good fortune; I wish him better fortune still; which is, that he may make a right use of it. The tragedies of Lloyd and Bensley are both very deep. If they are not of use to the surviving part of the society, it is their own fault.

I was debtor to Bensley seven pounds, or nine, I forget which. If you can find out his brother, you will do me a great favour if you will pay him for me; but do it at your leisure.

Yours and * theirs,

W. C.

* The author is supposed to mean Mrs. Hill and her two daughters. The word *theirs* cannot so well refer to the last antecedent, the persons who stand in that relation with it being

both dead at the time he wrote, as is evident from the context. LIPSIUS.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, August 14, 1765.

Both Lady Hesketh and my brother had apprized me of your intention to give me a call; and herein I find they were both mistaken. But they both informed me, likewise, that you were already set out for Warwickshire; in consequence of which latter intelligence, I have lived in continual expectation of seeing you, any time this fortnight. Now, how these two ingenious personages (for such they are both) should mistake an expedition to French Flanders for a journey to Warwickshire, is more than I, with all my ingenuity, can imagine. I am glad, however, that I have still a chance of seeing you, and shall treasure it up amongst my agree-

able expectations. In the mean time, you are welcome to the British shore, as the song has it, and I thank you for your epitome of your travels. You don't tell me how you escaped the vigilance of the custom-house officers, though I dare say you were knuckle-deep in contrabands, and had your boots stuffed with all and all manner of unlawful wares and merchandizes.

You know, Joe, I am very deep in debt to my little physician at St. Albans, and that the handsomest thing I can do will be to pay him *le plutôt qu'il sera possible*, (this is vile French, I believe, but you can, now, correct it.) My brother informs me that you have such a quantity of cash in your hands, on my account, that I may venture to send him forty pounds immediately. This, therefore, I shall be obliged if you will manage for me; and when you receive the hundred pounds, which my brother likewise brags you are shortly to receive, I shall be glad if you will discharge the remainder of

that debt, without waiting for any further advice from your humble servant.

I am become a professed horseman, and do hereby assume to myself the stile and title of the Knight of the Bloody Spur. It has cost me much to bring this point to bear; but I think I have at last accomplished it.

My love to all your family.

Yours ever,

W. C..

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Nov. 5, 1765.

I wrote to you about ten days ago,

Soliciting a quick return of gold,
To purchase certain horse that like me well.

Either my letter or your answer to it, I fear, has miscarried. The former, I hope; because

a miscarriage of the latter might be attended with bad consequences.

I find it impossible to proceed any longer in my present course, without danger of bankruptcy. I have therefore entered into an agreement with the Rev. Mr. Unwin, to lodge and board with him. The family are the most agreeable in the world. They live in a special good house, and in a very genteel way. They are all exactly what I would wish them to be, and I know I shall be as happy with them as I can be on this side of the sun. I did not dream of this matter till about five days ago: but now the whole is settled. I shall transfer myself thither as soon as I have satisfied all demands upon me here.

Yours ever,

W. C.

## TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Nov. 8, 1765.

Notwithstanding it is so agreeable a thing to read Law Lectures to the Students of Lyons' Inn, especially to the reader himself, I must beg leave to waive it. Danby Pickering must be the happy man; and I heartily wish him joy of his deputyship. As to the treat, I think if it goes before the lecture, it will be apt to blunt the apprehension of the students; and if it comes after, it may erase from their memories impressions so newly made. I could wish, therefore, that for their benefit and behoof, this circumstance were omitted. But if it be absolutely necessary, I hope Mr. Salt, or whoever takes the conduct of it, will see that it be managed with the frugality and temperance becoming so learned a body. I shall be obliged to you if you will present my respects to Mr. Treasurer Salt, and express my concern, at the

same time, that he had the trouble of sending me two letters upon this occasion. The first of them never came to hand.

I think the Welshman must *morris ;*—what think you ? If he withdraws to his native mountains we shall never catch him ; so the best way is to let him run in debt no longer.

As to E—, if he will listen to any thing, it must be to a remonstrance from you. A letter has no more effect upon him, than a messenger sent up to a paper kite ; and he will make me pay the postage of all my epistles into the bargain.

I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me whether my exchequer is full or empty, and whether the revenue of last year is yet come in, that I may proportion my payments to the exigencies of my affairs.

My dear Sephus, give my love to your family, and believe me much obliged to you for your invitation. At present I am in such an unsettled condition, that I can think of nothing but laying the foundation of my future abode at Unwin's. My being admitted there, is the effect of the great good-nature and friendly turn of that family, who, I have great reason to believe, are as desirous to do me service as they could be after a much longer acquaintance. Let your next, if it comes a week hence, be directed to me there.

The greatest part of the law books are those which Lord Cowper gave me. Those, and the very few which I bought myself, are all at the Major's service.

Stroke puss's back the wrong way and it will put her in mind of her master.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Dec. 3, 1765.

That I may return as particular an answer to your letter as possible, I will take it *item* by *item*.

First, then, I rejoice with you in the victory you have obtained over the Welshman's pocket. The reluctance with which he pays and promises to pay, gives me but little concern, further than as it seems to threaten you with the trouble of many fruitless applications hereafter, in the receipt of my lordship's rents.

Secondly, I am glad that you have received some money on my account; and am still more pleased that you have so much in bank, after the remittances already made. But that which increases my joy to the highest pitch of possible augmentation, is, that you expect to receive more shortly.

Thirdly, I should be quite in raptures with the fair promises of Mr. E—, if I believed he was in earnest. But the propensity of that gentleman to indulge himself in a jocular humour upon these serious occasions, though it is very entertaining, is not quite so good a joke as the performance of those promises would be. But men of wit are apt to be a little whimsical.

Fourthly, I do recollect that I myself am a little guilty of what I blame so much in Mr. E—: in the last letter I wrote you, having returned you so facetious an answer to your serious enquiry concerning the entertainment to be given, or not to be given, to the gentlemen of New Inn, that you must needs have been at a loss to collect from it my real intentions. My sincere desire, however, in this respect is, that they may fast; and being supported in this resolution, not only by an assurance that I can, and therefore ought to make a better use of my money, but also by the exam-

ples of my predecessors in the same business, Mr. Barrington and Mr. Schutz, I have no longer any doubt concerning the propriety of condemning them to abstinence upon this occasion; and cannot but wish that point may be carried, if it can be done without engaging you in the trouble of any disagreeable haggling, and higgling, and twisting, and wriggling, to save my money.

Lastly, if I am not mistaken, I owe Thurlow five guineas. Be so kind as to pay him when he happens to fall in your way.

Yours, my dear Joe,

W. C.

The fire of the general election begins to smoke here already.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Oct. 27, 1766.

If every dealer and chapman was connected with creditors like you, the poor commissioners of bankrupts would be ruined. I can only wonder at you, considering my knack at running in debt, and my slender ability to pay. After all, I am afraid that the poor stock must suffer. * * * * * * * * * * * * My finances will never be able to satisfy these craving necessities, without leaving my debt to you entirely unsatisfied. And though I know you are sincere in what you say, and as willing to wait for your money as heart can wish, yet *quære*, whether the next half year, which will bring its expenses with it, will be more propitious to you than the present? The succeeding half years may bear a close resemblance to their insolvent predecessors continually; and unless we break bank some time or other, your proposal

of payment may be always what it is at present. What matters it, therefore, to reprieve the stock, which must come to execution at last.

I am heartily glad my uncle* has recovered his spirits; and desire you will remember me to all your associates at Taplow. I sympathise with you upon the fugitive nature of the longest vacation, and wish, for your sake, that the chancellor would pack up his great seal, and hold his court in your neighbourhood.

Yours ever,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, May 14, 1767.

I only know that I was once the happy owner of a red-leather trunk, and that my bro-

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* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

ther, when I first saw him at Cambridge, upon my enquiring after my papers, &c., told me that in a red-leather trunk they were all safely deposited. The whole contents of it are little worth, and if I never see them more, I shall be but very moderately afflicted by the loss, though I fancy the trunk upon the road will prove to be the very trunk in question.

Together with your letter came a bill from my quondam hosier, in Fleet-street, Mr. Reynolds, for the sum of two pounds ten shillings, desiring present payment, cash being scarce. I sent him an order for the money by this day's post. My future expenses in the hosiery way will be small, for Mrs. Unwin knits all my stockings, and would knit my hats too, if that were possible.

I imagine my brother will be in town about midsummer, when he will be able to confer with you upon the subject of the inexorable

Mr. E——, more to the purpose than I can by letter.

Having commenced gardener, I study the arts of pruning, sowing, and planting; and enterprise every thing in that way, from melons down to cabbages. I have a large garden to display my abilities in, and, were we twenty miles nearer London, I might turn higgler, and serve your honour with cauliflowers, and brocoli, at the best hand. I shall possibly now and then desire you to call at the seed-shop, in your way to Westminster, though sparingly. Should I do it often, you would begin to think you had a mother-in-law at Berkhampstead.*

Yours, dear Joe,

W. C.

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* The writer's father having been rector of Berkhampstead, this probably alludes to the numerous commissions which his friend would recollect he had to execute, when resident in the Temple, for his surviving partner.

## TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, June 16, 1767.

This part of the world is not productive of much news, unless the coldness of the weather be so, which is excessive for the season. We expect, or rather experience a warm contest between the candidates for the county: the preliminary movements of bribery, threatening, and drunkenness, being already taken. The Sandwich interest seems to shake, though both parties are very sanguine. Lord Carysfort is supposed to be in great jeopardy, though as yet, I imagine, a clear judgment cannot be formed; for a man may have all the noise on his side, and yet lose his election. You know me to be an uninterested person, and I am sure I am a very ignorant one in things of this kind. I only wish it was over, for it occasions

the most detestable scene of profligacy and riot that can be imagined.

Yours ever,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, Oct. 10, 1767.

One more law question; and I believe the last,—A man holds lands in right of his wife, the rents payable half-yearly, viz. at Lady-day, and Michaelmas; dies in July. Are not the rising rents the property of the widow? I mean, the rent of the whole last half year. You are a better counsellor than I was, but I think you have much such a client in me, as I had in Dick Harcourt. Much good may do you with me!

I have no map to consult, at present, but by what remembrance I have of the situation

of this place in the last I saw, it lies at the northernmost point of the county. We are just five miles beyond Newport Pagnell. I am willing to suspect that you make this enquiry with a *view* to an *interview*, when time shall serve. We may possibly be settled in our own house in about a month, where so good a friend of mine will be extremely welcome to Mrs. Unwin. We shall have a bed, and a warm fire-side, at your service, if you can come before next summer; and if not, a parlour that looks the north wind full in the face, where you may be as cool as in the groves of Valombrosa.

Yours, my dear Sephus,

affectionately ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Oct. 20, 1768.

By this time, I presume, you are returned to the precincts of the law. The latter end of October, I know, generally puts an end to your relaxations; such as reading upon sunshiny banks, and contemplating the clouds, as you lie upon your back.

Permit it to be one of the *aliena negotia centum*, which are now beginning to buzz in your ears, to send me a twenty pound note by the first opportunity. I beg my affectionate respects to my friends in Cook's-court, and am, dear Sephus,

Yours sincerely,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Jan. 21, 1769.

I rejoice with you in your recovery, and that you have escaped from the hands of one from whose hands you will not always escape. Death is either the most formidable, or the most comfortable thing, we have in prospect, on this side of eternity. To be brought near to him, and to discern neither of these features in his face, would argue a degree of insensibility, of which I will not suspect my friend, whom I know to be a thinking man. You have been brought down to the sides of the grave, and you have been raised again by Him who has the keys of the invisible world; who opens, and none can shut, who shuts, and none can open. I do not forget to return thanks to Him on your behalf, and to pray that your life, which He has spared, may be devoted to his service.

"Behold! I stand at the door and knock," is the word of Him, on whom both our mortal and immortal life depend, and blessed be his name; it is the word of one who wounds only that He may heal, and who waits to be gracious. The language of every such dispensation is, "Prepare to meet thy God." It speaks with the voice of mercy and goodness, for without such notices, whatever preparation we might make for other events, we should make none for this. My dear friend, I desire and pray, that when this last enemy shall come to execute an *unlimited* commission upon us, we may be found ready, being established and rooted in a well-grounded faith in His name, who conquered and triumphed over him upon his Cross.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOE, Jan. 29, 1769.

I have a moment to spare, to tell you that your letter is just come to hand, and to thank you for it. I do assure you, the gentleness and candour of your manner engages my affection to you very much. You answer with mildness to an admonition, which would have provoked many to anger. I have not time to add more, except just to hint, that if I am ever enabled to look forward to Death with comfort, which, I thank God, is sometimes the case with me, I do not take my view of it from the top of my own works and deservings, though God is witness that the labour of my life is to keep a conscience void of offence towards Him. He is always formidable to me, but when I see him disarmed of his sting, by having sheathed it in the body of Christ Jesus.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, August 27, 1771.

I take a friend's share in all your concerns, so far as they come to my knowledge, and consequently did not receive the news of your marriage with indifference. I wish you and your bride all the happiness that belongs to the state; and the still greater felicity of that state which marriage is only a type of. All those connexions shall be dissolved; but there is an indissoluble bond between Christ and his church, the subject of derision to an unthinking world, but the glory and happiness of all his people.

I join with your mother and sisters in their joy upon the present occasion, and beg my affectionate respects to them, and to Mrs. Hill unknown.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 27, 1772.

I only write to return you thanks for your kind offer—*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ.* But I will endeavour to go on without troubling you. Excuse an expression that dishonours your friendship; I should rather say, it would be a trouble to myself, and I know you will be generous enough to give me credit for the assertion. I had rather want many things, any thing, indeed, that this world could afford me, than abuse the affection of a friend. I suppose you are sometimes troubled upon my account. But you need not. I have no doubt it will be seen, when my days are closed, that I served a Master who would not suffer me to want any thing that was good for me. He said to Jacob, I will surely do thee good; and this he said, not for his sake only, but for ours

also, if we trust in Him. This thought relieves me from the greatest part of the distress I should else suffer in my present circumstances, and enables me to sit down peacefully upon the wreck of my fortune.

Yours ever, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 2, 1772.

My obligations to you sit easy upon me, because I am sure you confer them in the spirit of a friend. 'Tis pleasant to some minds to confer obligations, and it is not unpleasant to others to be properly sensible of them. I hope I have this pleasure—and can with a true sense of your kindness subscribe myself,

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Nov. 5, 1772.

Believe me, my dear friend, truly sensible of your invitation, though I do not accept it. My peace of mind is of so delicate a constitution, that the air of London will not agree with it. You have my prayers, the only return I can make you, for your many acts of still-continued friendship.

If you should smile, or even laugh at my conclusion, and I were near enough to see it, I should not be angry, though I should be grieved. It is not long since I should have laughed at such a recompense myself. But glory be to the name of Jesus, those days are past, and, I trust, never to return!

I am yours, and Mrs. Hill's,

with much sincerity,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 12, 1776.

One to whom fish is so welcome as it is to me, can have no great occasion to distinguish the sorts. In general, therefore, whatever fish are likely to think a jaunt into the country agreeable, will be sure to find me ready to receive them; butts, plaice, flounder, or any other.

Having suffered so much by nervous fevers myself, I know how to congratulate Ashley upon his recovery. Other distempers only batter the walls; but *they* creep silently into the citadel, and put the garrison to the sword.

You perceive I have not made a squeamish use of your obliging offer. The remembrance of past years, and of the sentiments formerly

exchanged in our evening walks, convinces me still that an unreserved acceptance of what is graciously offered, is the handsomest way of dealing with one of your character.

Believe me yours,

W. C.

As to the frequency, which you leave to my choice, too, you have no need to exceed the number of your former remittances.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April—I fancy the 20th, 1777.

Thanks for a turbot, a lobster, and Captain Brydone; a gentleman, who relates his travels so agreeably, that he deserves always to travel with an agreeable companion. I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him the only poet since Shakspeare entitled to

the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I was prejudiced. He did not belong to our Thursday society, and was an Eton man, which lowered him prodigiously in our esteem. I once thought Swift's Letters the best that could be written; but I like Gray's better. His humour, or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet, I think, equally poignant with the Dean's.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 25, 1777.

We differ not much in our opinion of Mr. Gray. When I wrote last, I was in the middle of the book. His later Epistles, I

think, are worth little, *as such*; but might be turned to excellent account by a young student of taste and judgment. As to Mr. West's Letters, I think I could easily bring your opinion of them to square with mine. They are elegant and sensible, but have nothing in them that is characteristic, or that discriminates them from the letters of any other young man of taste and learning. As to the book you mention, I am in doubt whether to read it or not. I should like the philosophical part of it, but the political, which, I suppose, is a detail of intrigues carried on by the Company and their servants, a history of rising and falling nabobs, I should have no appetite to at all. I will not, therefore, give you the trouble of sending it at present.

Yours affectionately;

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 13, 1777.

You need not give yourself any further trouble to procure me the South Sea Voyages. Lord Dartmouth, who was here about a month since, and was so kind as to pay me two visits, has furnished me with both Cook's and Forster's. 'Tis well for the poor natives of those distant countries that our national expenses cannot be supplied by cargoes of yams and bananas. Curiosity, therefore, being once satisfied, they may possibly be permitted for the future to enjoy their riches of that kind in peace.

If, when you are most at leisure, you can find out Baker upon the Microscope, or Vincent Bourne's Latin Poems, the last edition, and send them, I shall be obliged to you. Either, or both, if they can be easily found.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 1, 1778.

Your last packet was doubly welcome, and Mrs. Hill's kindness gives me peculiar pleasure, not as coming from a stranger to me, for I do not account her so, though I never saw her, but as coming from one so nearly connected with yourself. I shall take care to acknowledge the receipt of her obliging letter, when I return the books. Assure yourself, in the mean time, that I read as if the librarian was at my elbow, continually jogging it, and growling out, Make haste. But as I read aloud, I shall not have finished before the end of the week, and will return them by the diligence next Monday.

I shall be glad if you will let me know whether I am to understand by the sorrow you express, that any part of my former supplies is

actually cut off, or whether they are only more tardy in coming in, than usual. It is useful even to the rich, to know, as nearly as may be, the exact amount of their income; but how much more so to a man of my small dimensions. If the former should be the case, I shall have less reason to be surprised, than I have to wonder at the continuance of them so long. Favours are favours indeed, when laid out upon so barren a soil, where the expense of sowing is never accompanied by the smallest hope of return. What pain there is in gratitude, I have often felt; but the pleasure of requiting an obligation, has always been out of my reach.

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 11, 1778.

Poor Sir Thomas!* I knew that I had a place in his affections, and from his own information, many years ago, a place in his will; but little thought that after the lapse of so many years I should still retain it. His remembrance of me, after so long a season of separation, has done me much honour, and leaves me the more reason to regret his decease.

I am reading the Abbé with great satisfaction, and think him the most intelligent writer upon so extensive a subject I ever met with; in every respect superior to the Abbé in Scotland.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

* Sir Thomas Hesketh, Baronet, of Rufford Hall, in Lancashire.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 7, 1778.

I have been in continual fear lest every post should bring a summons for the Abbé Raynal; and am glad that I have finished him before my fears were realized. I have kept him long, but not through neglect or idleness. I read the five volumes to Mrs. Unwin; and my voice will seldom serve me with more than an hour's reading at a time. I am indebted to him for much information upon subjects, which, however interesting, are so remote from those with which country folks in general are conversant, that had not his works reached me at Olney, I should have been for ever ignorant of them.

I admire him as a philosopher, as a writer, as a man of extraordinary intelligence, and no less extraordinary abilities to digest it. He is a

true patriot. But then the world is his country. The frauds and tricks of the cabinet, and the counter, seem to be equally objects of his aversion. And if he had not found that religion too had undergone a mixture of artifice, in its turn, perhaps he would have been a Christian.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 18, 1778.

I truly rejoice that the chancellor has made you such a present, that he has given such an additional lustre to it by his manner of conferring it, and that all this happened before you went to Wargrave, because it made your retirement there the more agreeable. This is just according to the character of the man. He will give grudgingly, in answer to solicitation, but delights in surprising those he esteems,

with his bounty. May you live to receive still further proofs that I am not mistaken in my opinion of him.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July — 79.

When I was at Margate, it was an excursion of pleasure to go to see Ramsgate. The pier, I remember, was accounted a most excellent piece of stone-work, and such I found it. By this time, I suppose, it is finished, and surely it is no small advantage, that you have an opportunity of observing how nicely those great stones are put together, as often as you please, without either trouble or expense. * *

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There was not, at that time, much to be seen in the Isle of Thanet, besides the beauty of the country, and the fine prospects of the sea, which are no where surpassed except in the Isle of Wight, or upon some parts of the coast of Hampshire. One sight, however, I remember, engaged my curiosity, and I went to see it. A fine piece of ruins, built by the late Lord Holland, at a great expense, which, the day after I saw it, tumbled down for nothing. Perhaps, therefore, it is still a ruin; and if it is, I would advise you by all means to visit it, as it must have been much improved by this fortunate incident. It is hardly possible to put stones together with that air of wild and magnificent disorder which they are sure to acquire by falling of their own accord.

I remember (the last thing I mean to remember upon this occasion) that Sam Cox,

the counsel, walking by the sea-side, as if absorbed in deep contemplation, was questioned about what he was musing on. He replied, "I was wondering that such an almost infinite and unwieldy element should produce *a sprat.*"

Our love attends your whole party.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 17, 1779.

We envy you your sea-breezes. In the garden we feel nothing but the reflection of the heat from the walls; and in the parlour, from the opposite houses. I fancy Virgil was so situated, when he wrote those two beautiful lines:

——— Oh quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!

The worst of it is, that though the sun-beams strike as forcibly upon my harp-strings as they did upon his, they elicit no such sounds, but rather produce such groans as they are said to have drawn from those of the statue of Memnon.

As you have ventured to make the experiment, your own experience will be your best guide in the article of bathing. An inference will hardly follow, though one should pull at it with all one's might, from Smollett's case to yours. He was corpulent, muscular, and strong; whereas, if you were either stolen or strayed, such a description of you in an advertisement would hardly direct an enquirer with sufficient accuracy and exactness. But if bathing does not make your head ache, or prevent your sleeping at night, I should imagine it could not hurt you.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 2, 1779.

You begin to count the remaining days of the vacation, not with impatience, but through unwillingness to see the end of it. For the mind of man, at least of most men, is equally busy in anticipating the evil and the good. That word *anticipation* puts me in remembrance of the pamphlet of that name, which, if you purchased, I should be glad to borrow. I have seen only an extract from it in the Review, which made me laugh heartily, and wish to peruse the whole.

The newspaper informs me of the arrival of the Jamaica fleet. I hope it imports some pine-apple plants for me. I have a good frame and a good bed prepared to receive them. I send you annexed a fable, in which the pine-apple makes a figure, and shall be glad if you

like the taste of it. Two pair of soles, with shrimps, which arrived last night, demand my acknowledgments. You have heard that when Arion performed upon the harp, the fish followed him. I really have no design to fiddle you out of more fish, but if you should esteem my verses worthy of such a price, though I shall never be so renowned as he was, I shall think myself equally indebted to the muse that helps me.

*The Pine Apple and the Bee.*

**"The pine-apples," &c.***

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill. She has put Mr. Wright to the expense of building a new hot-house: the plants produced by the seeds she gave me, having grown so large as to require an apartment by themselves.

Yours,

W. C.

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* Vide Cowper's Poems.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 14, 1779.

Your approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sun-beams from their surface.

*On the Promotion of Edward Thurlow, &c.**

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

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* Cowper's Poems.

## TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, March 4, 1780.

To communicate surprise is almost, perhaps quite, as agreeable as to receive it. This is my present motive for writing to you rather than to Mr. Newton. He would be pleased with hearing from me, but he would not be surprised at it; you see, therefore, I am selfish upon the present occasion, and principally consult my own gratification. Indeed, if I consulted yours, I should be silent, for I have no such budget as the Minister's, furnished and stuffed with ways and means for every emergency, and shall find it difficult, perhaps, to raise supplies even for a short epistle.

You have observed in common conversation, that the man who coughs the oftenest, (I mean if he has not a cold) does it because he has nothing to say. Even so it is in letter-writing:

a long preface, such as mine, is an ugly symptom, and always forebodes great sterility in the following pages.

The vicarage-house became a melancholy object, as soon as Mr. Newton had left it; when you left it, it became more melancholy: now it is actually occupied by another family, even I cannot look at it without being shocked. As I walked in the garden this evening, I saw the smoke issue from the study chimney, and said to myself, That used to be a sign that Mr. Newton was there; but it is so no longer. The walls of the house know nothing of the change that has taken place; the bolt of the chamber-door sounds just as it used to do; and when Mr. P—— goes upstairs, for aught I know, or ever shall know, the fall of his foot could hardly, perhaps, be distinguished from that of Mr. Newton. But Mr. Newton's foot will never be heard upon that staircase again. These reflections, and such as these, occurred

to me upon the occasion; * * * * * *. If I were in a condition to leave Olney too, I certainly would not stay in it. It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre; my appearance would startle them, and theirs would be shocking to me.

Such are my thoughts about the matter. Others are more deeply affected, and by more weighty considerations, having been many years the objects of a ministry which they had reason to account themselves happy in the possession of. * * * * *

We were concerned at your account of Robert, and have little doubt but he will shuffle himself out of his place. Where he will find another, is a question not to be resolved by those who recommended him to this.

I wrote him a long letter, a day or two after the receipt of yours, but I am afraid it was only clapping a blister upon the crown of a wig-block.

My respects attend Mr. Newton and yourself, accompanied with much affection for you both.

Yours, dear Madam,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 16, 1780.

If I had had the horns of a snail, I should have drawn them in the moment I saw the reason of your epistolary brevity, because I felt it too. May your seven reams be multiplied into fourteen, till your letters become truly Lacedæmonian, and are reduced to a

single syllable. Though I shall be a sufferer by the effect, I shall rejoice in the cause. You are naturally formed for business, and such a head as yours can never have too much of it. Though my predictions have been fulfilled in two instances, I do not plume myself much upon my sagacity; because it required but little to foresee that Thurlow would be Chancellor, and that you would have a crowded office. As to the rest of my connexions, there, too, I have given proof of equal foresight, with not a jot more reason for vanity. * * * *

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

To use the phrase of all who ever wrote upon the state of Europe, the political horizon is dark indeed. The cloud has been thickening, and the thunder advancing many years. The storm now seems to be vertical, and threatens to burst upon the land, as if, with the next clap, it would shake all to pieces. — As for me, I am no Quaker, except

where military matters are in question, and there I am much of the same mind with an honest man, who, when he was forced into the service, declared he would not fight, and gave this reason—because he saw nothing worth fighting for. You will say, perhaps, Is not Liberty worth a struggle? True: but will success insure it to me? Might I not, like the Americans, emancipate myself from one master, only to serve a score, and, with laurels upon my brow, sigh for my former chains again?

Many thanks for your kind invitation. Ditto to Mrs. Hill, for the seeds—unexpected, and therefore the more welcome.

You gave me great pleasure, by what you say of my uncle*. His motto shall be

Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus æstas.

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* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

I remember the time when I have been kept waking, by the fear that he would die before me; but now, I think, I shall grow old first.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,

W. C.

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TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, June, 1780.

When I write to Mr. Newton, he answers me by letter; when I write to you, you answer me in fish. I return you many thanks for the mackerel and lobster. They assured me in terms as intelligible as pen and ink could have spoken, that you still remember *Orchard-side;* and though they never spoke in their lives, and it was still less to be expected from them that they should speak, being dead, they gave us an assurance of your affection that corresponds exactly with that which Mr. Newton ex-

presses towards us in all his letters. — For my own part, I never in my life began a letter more at a venture than the present. It is possible that I may finish it, but perhaps more than probable that I shall not. I have had several indifferent nights, and the wind is easterly; two circumstances so unfavourable to me in all my occupations, but especially that of writing, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could even bring myself to attempt it.

You have never yet perhaps been made acquainted with the unfortunate Tom F—'s misadventure. He and his wife returning from Hanslope fair, were coming down Weston-lane; to wit, themselves, their horse, and their great wooden panniers, at ten o'clock at night. The horse having a lively imagination, and very weak nerves, fancied he either saw or heard something, but has never been able to say what. A sudden fright will impart ac-

tivity, and a momentary vigour, even to lameness itself. Accordingly, he started, and sprang from the middle of the road to the side of it, with such surprising alacrity, that he dismounted the gingerbread baker, and his gingerbread wife, in a moment. Not contented with this effort, nor thinking himself yet out of danger, he proceeded as fast as he could to a full gallop, rushed against the gate at the bottom of the lane, and opened it for himself, without perceiving that there was any gate there. Still he galloped, and with a velocity and momentum continually increasing, till he arrived in Olney. I had been in bed about ten minutes, when I heard the most uncommon and unaccountable noise that can be imagined. It was, in fact, occasioned by the clattering of tin pattypans and a Dutch-oven against the sides of the panniers. Much gingerbread was picked up in the street, and Mr. Lucy's windows were broken all to pieces. Had this been all, it would have been a comedy, but we

learned the next morning, that the poor woman's collar-bone was broken, and she has hardly been able to resume her occupation since.

What is added on the other side, if I could have persuaded myself to write sooner, would have reached you sooner; 'tis about ten days old. * * * * * * * * * * * *

*The Doves.*†

The male Dove was smoking a pipe, and the female Dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye.

Yours, dear Madam,

W. C.

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† Vide Cowper's Poems, Vol. I.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI, July 8, 1780.

By this time, I suppose, you have ventured to take your fingers out of your ears, being delivered from the deafening shouts of the most zealous mob that ever strained their lungs in the cause of religion. I congratulate you upon a gentle relapse into the customary sounds of a great city, which, though we rustics abhor them, as noisy and dissonant, are a musical and sweet murmur, compared with what you have lately heard. The tinkling of a kennel may be distinguished now, where the roaring of a cascade would have been sunk and lost. I never suspected, till the newspapers informed me of it, a few days since, that the barbarous uproar had reached Great Queen Street. I hope Mrs. Hill was in the country, and shall rejoice to hear that, as I am sure you did not take up the pro-

testant cudgels upon this hair-brained occasion, so you have not been pulled in pieces as a papist.

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 12, 1780.

Such nights as I frequently spend, are but a miserable prelude to the succeeding day, and indispose me above all things to the business of writing. Yet with a pen in my hand, if I am able to write at all, I find myself gradually relieved; and as I am glad of any employment that may serve to engage my attention, so especially I am pleased with an opportunity of conversing with you, though it be but upon paper. This occupation above all others assists me in that self-deception to which I am indebted for all the little comfort I enjoy;

things seem to be as they were, and I almost forget that they never can be so again.

We are both obliged to you for a sight of Mr. ——'s letter. The friendly and obliging manner of it will much enhance the difficulty of answering it. I think I can see plainly that though he does not hope for your applause, he would gladly escape your censure. He seems to approach you smoothly and softly, and to take you gently by the hand, as if he bespoke your lenity, and entreated you at least to spare him. You have such skill in the management of your pen, that I doubt not you will be able to send him a balmy reproof that shall give him no reason to complain of a broken head.— How delusive is the wildest speculation when pursued with eagerness, and nourished with such arguments as the perverted ingenuity of such a mind as his can easily furnish!— Judgment falls asleep upon the bench, while Imagination, like a smug, pert counsellor, stands

chattering at the bar, and with a deal of fine-spun, enchanting sophistry, carries all before him.

If I had strength of mind, I have not strength of body for the task which, you say, some would impose upon me. I cannot bear much thinking. The meshes of that fine network, the brain, are composed of such mere spinners' threads in me, that when a long thought finds its way into them, it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about at such a rate as seems to threaten the whole contexture.—No —I must needs refer it again to you.

My enigma will probably find you out, and you will find out my enigma at some future time. I am not in a humour to transcribe it now. Indeed I wonder that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if harlequin should intrude himself into

the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unseasonable at any rate, but more especially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary prospect, will gladly fix its eyes on any thing that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail.

You would believe, though I did not say it at the end of every letter, that we remember you and Mrs. Newton with the same affection as ever; but I would not therefore excuse myself from writing what it gives you pleasure to read. I have often wished indeed, when writing to an ordinary correspondent, for the revival of the Roman custom — *salutis* at top, and *vale* at bottom. But as the French have taught all Europe to enter a room and to leave it with a most ceremonious bow, so they have

taught us to begin and conclude our letters in the same manner. However I can say to you,

*Sans ceremonie,*

Adieu, *mon ami!*

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Aug. 10, 1780.

I greet you at your castle of Buen Retiro, and wish you could enjoy the unmixt pleasures of the country there. But it seems you are obliged to dash the cup with a portion of those bitters you are always swallowing in town. Well—you are honourably and usefully employed, and ten times more beneficially to society, than if you were piping to a few sheep under a spreading beech, or listening to a tinkling rill. Besides, by the effect of long custom and habitual practice, you are not only enabled to endure your occupation, but even find it

agreeable. I remember the time when it would not have suited you so well, to have devoted so large a part of your vacation to the objects of your profession; and you, I dare say, have not forgot what a seasonable relaxation you found, when, lying at full stretch upon the ruins of an old wall, by the sea-side, you amused yourself with Tasso's Jerusalem, and the Pastor Fido. I recollect that we both pitied Mr. De Grey, when we called at his cottage at Taplow, and found, not the master indeed, but his desk, with his white-leaved folio upon it, which bespoke him as much a man of business in his retirement as in Westminster Hall. But by these steps he ascended the Bench. Now he may read what he pleases, and ride where he will, if the gout will give him leave. And you who have no gout, and probably never will, when your hour of dismission comes, will, for that reason, if for no other, be a happier man than he.

I am, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

P. S. Mr. —— has not thought proper to favour me with his book, and having no interest in the subject, I have not thought proper to purchase it. Indeed I have no curiosity to read what I am sure must be erroneous before I read it. Truth is worth every thing that can be given for it; but a mere display of ingenuity, calculated only to mislead, is worth nothing.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 10, 1780.

I am sorry that the bookseller shuffles off the trouble of package upon any body that belongs to you. I think I could cast him upon this point, in an action upon the case, grounded upon the terms of his own undertaking. He engages to serve country customers. Ergo,

as it would be unreasonable to expect that when a country gentleman wants a book, he should order his chaise, and bid the man drive to Exeter Change; and as it is not probable that the book would find the way to him, of itself, though it were the wisest that ever was written, I should suppose the law would compel him. For I recollect it is a maxim of good authority in the courts, that there is no right without a remedy. And if another, or third person, should not be suffered to interpose between my right and the remedy the law gives me, where the right is invaded, much less, I apprehend, shall the man himself, who of his own mere motion gives me that right, be suffered to do it.

I never made so long an argument upon a law case before. I ask your pardon for doing it now. You have but little need of such entertainment.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Dec. 21, 1780.

I thank you for your anecdote of Judge Carpenter. If it really happened, it is one of the best stories I ever heard; and if not, it has at least the merit of being *bentrovato.* We both very sincerely laughed at it, and think the whole Livery of London must have done the same; though I have known some persons whose faces, as if they had been cast in a mould, could never be provoked to the least alteration of a single feature; so that you might as well relate a good story to a barber's block.

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Your sentiments with respect to me are exactly Mrs. Unwin's. She, like you, is perfectly sure of my deliverance, and often tells me so. I make but one answer, and sometimes none

at all. That answer gives *her* no pleasure, and would give *you* as little; therefore at this time I suppress it. It is better on every account that they who interest themselves so deeply in that event, should believe the certainty of it, than that they should not. It is a comfort to *them* at least, if it is none to me; and as I could not, if I would, so neither would I, if I could, deprive them of it.

I annex a long thought in verse for your perusal. It was produced about last midsummer, but I never could prevail with myself, till now, to transcribe it.* You have bestowed some commendations on a certain poem now in the press, and they, I suppose, have at least animated me to the task. If human nature may be compared to a piece of tapestry, (and why not?) then human nature, as it sub-

* The verses alluded to, appear to have been separated from the letter.

sists in me, though it is sadly faded on the right side, retains all its colour on the wrong. I am pleased with commendation, and though not passionately desirous of indiscriminate praise, or what is generally called popularity, yet when a judicious friend claps me on the back, I own I find it an encouragement. At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine, to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget every thing that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.

It will not be long, perhaps, before you will

receive a poem called the *Progress of Error*. That will be succeeded by another, in due time, called *Truth*. Don't be alarmed. I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin that I can manage him, and make him stop when I please.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, Jan. 21, 1781.

I am glad that the *Progress of Error* did not Err in its Progress, as I feared it had; and that it has reached you safe; and still more pleased that it has met with your approbation; for if it had not, I should have wished it had miscarried, and have been sorry that the bearer's memory had

served him so well upon the occasion. I knew him to be that sort of genius, which, being much busied in making excursions of the imaginary kind, is not always present to its own immediate concerns, much less to those of others; and having reposed the trust in him, began to regret that I had done so, when it was too late. But I did it to save a frank, and as the affair has turned out, that end was very well answered. This is committed to the hands of a less volatile person, and therefore more to be depended on.

As to the poem called *Truth*, which is already longer than its elder brother, and is yet to be lengthened by the addition of perhaps twenty lines, perhaps more; I shrink from the thought of transcribing it at present. But as there is no need to be in any hurry about it, I hope that in some rainy season, which the next month will probably bring with it, when perhaps I may be glad of em-

ployment, the undertaking will appear less formidable.

You need not withhold from us any intelligence relating to yourselves, upon an apprehension that Mr. R—— has been beforehand with you upon those subjects, for we could get nothing out of him. I have known such travellers, in my time, and Mrs. Newton is no stranger to one of them, who keep all their observations and discoveries to themselves; till they are extorted from them by mere dint of examination, and cross-examination. He told us indeed, that some invisible agent supplied you every Sunday with a coach, which we were pleased with hearing; and this, I think, was the sum total of his information.

We are much concerned for Mr. Barham's loss; but it is well for that gentleman, that those amiable features in his character, which

most incline one to sympathise with him, are the very graces and virtues that will strengthen him to bear it with equanimity and patience. People that have neither his light nor experience, will wonder that a disaster which would perhaps have broken their hearts, is not heavy enough to make any abatement in the cheerfulness of his.

Your books came yesterday. I shall not repeat to you what I said to Mrs. Unwin, after having read two or three of the letters. I admire the preface, in which you have given an air of novelty to a worn-out topic, and have actually engaged the favour of the reader by saying those things in a delicate and uncommon way, which in general are disgusting.

I suppose you know that Mr. Scott will be in town on Tuesday. He is likely to take possession of the Vicarage at last,

with the best grace possible; at least, if he and Mr. Browne can agree upon the terms.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 6, 1781.

Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others. You can no where find objects more entitled to your pity, than where your pity seeks them. A man whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into danger, will always be viewed with an eye of compassion by those who understand what human nature is made of. And while we acknowledge the severity of the law to be founded upon principles of necessity and justice,

and are glad that there is such a barrier provided for the peace of society, if we consider that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is not of our own making, we shall be, as you are, tenderly affected with the view of his misery, and not the less so because he has brought it upon himself. I look upon the worst man in Chelmsford gaol with a more favourable eye than upon ——, who claims a servant's wages from one who never was his master.

I give you joy of your own hair. No doubt you are a considerable gainer in your appearance by being disperiwigged. The best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair; why then should he that has hair enough of his own, have recourse to imitation? I have little doubt, but that if an arm, or a leg, could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the amputation of a curl, or a lock of hair, the natural limb would have

been thought less becoming, or less convenient, by some men, than a wooden one, and been disposed of accordingly.

Yours ever,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 15, 1781.

It is possible that Mrs. Hill may not be herself a sufferer by the late terrible catastrophe in the Islands; but I should suppose, by her correspondence with those parts, she may be connected with some that are. In either case, I condole with her; for it is reasonable to imagine that since the first tour that Columbus made into the Western world, it never before experienced such a convulsion; perhaps never since the foundation of the globe. You say the state grows old,

and discovers many symptoms of decline. A writer, possessed of a genius for hypothesis, like that of Burnet, might construct a plausible argument to prove that the world itself is in a state of superannuation, if there be such a word. If not, there must be such a one as superannuity. When that just equilibrium that has hitherto supported all things, seems to fail, when the elements burst the chain that has bound them, the wind sweeping away the works of man, and man himself together with his works, and the ocean seeming to overleap the command, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," these irregular and prodigious vagaries seem to bespeak a decay, and forebode, perhaps, not a very distant dissolution. This thought has so run away with my attention, that I have left myself no room for the little politics that have only Great Britain for their object. Who knows but that while a thousand, and ten thousand tongues

are employed in adjusting the scale of our national concerns, in complaining of new taxes, and funds loaded with a debt of accumulating millions, the consummation of all things may discharge it in a moment, and the scene of all this bustle disappear, as if it had never been? Charles Fox would say, perhaps, he thought it very unlikely. I question if he could prove even that. I am sure, however, he could not prove it to be impossible.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 18, 1781.

I send you *Table Talk*. It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know, may be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people

into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favour of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in my circumstances has a difficult part to act: One minute obliged to bridle his humour, if he has any, and the next, to clap a spur to the sides of it: Now ready to weep from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If this be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is, and if any man doubt it, let him try. Whether all this management and contrivance be necessary, I do not know, but am inclined to

suspect that if my Muse was to go forth clad in Quaker colour, without one bit of ribband to enliven her appearance, she might walk from one end of London to the other, as little noticed as if she were one of the sisterhood indeed.

As to the word you mention, I a little suspected that you would object to it. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

I am no friend to the use of words taken from what an uncle of mine called the diabolical dictionary, but it happens sometimes that a coarse expression is almost necessary to do justice to the indignation excited by an abominable subject. I am obliged to you, however, for your opinion, and though poetry is apt to betray one into a warmth that one is not sensible of in writing prose, shall always desire to be set down by it.

Mr. Scott told Mr. Wilson yesterday or the day before, that he had again asked Mr. R——

whether or not he intended to continue his speaking, and that Mr. R —— would give him no determinate answer. This I had from Mr. Wilson himself. It will be well if that business ends peaceably. Nothing could be more tenderly cogent than your letter to his colleague, and he, for aught I know, may be properly influenced by it; but it seems plain that either the before-mentioned had not seen it, or that if he had, he had not felt it.—Geary Ball has lost his wife. She was buried on Thursday, having left her friends a comfortable hope of her welfare.

You had been married thirty-one years last Monday. When you married, I was eighteen years of age, and had just left Westminster school. At that time, I valued a man according to his proficiency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that. I lived to see the vanity of what I had made my pride, and in a few years found that there

were other attainments which would carry a man more handsomely through life, than a mere knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind them. In measure as my attachment to these gentry wore off, I found a more welcome reception among those whose acquaintance it was more my interest to cultivate. But all this time was spent in painting a piece of wood, that had no life in it. At last I began to think *indeed;* I found myself in possession of many baubles, but not one grain of solidity in all my treasures. Then I learned the truth, and then I lost it; and there ends my history. I would no more than you wish to live such a life over again, but for one reason. He that is carried to execution, though through the roughest road, when he arrives at the destined spot, would be glad, notwithstanding the many jolts he met with, to repeat his journey.

Yours, my dear Sir, with our joint love,

W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

DEAR MADAM, Feb. 19, 1781.

When a man, especially a man that lives altogether in the country, undertakes to write to a lady he never saw, he is the awkwardest creature in the world. He begins his letter under the same sensations he would have, if he was to accost her in person, only with this difference,—that he may take as much time as he pleases, for consideration, and need not write a single word that he has not well weighed and pondered beforehand, much less a sentence that he does not think supereminently clever. In every other respect, whether he be engaged in an interview or in a letter, his behaviour is, for the most part, equally constrained and unnatural. He resolves, as they say, to set the best leg foremost, which often proves to be what Hudibras calls —

——————Not that of bone,
But much its better—th' wooden one.

His extraordinary effort only serves, as in the case of that hero, to throw him on the other side of his horse; and he owes his want of success, if not to absolute stupidity, to his most earnest endeavour to secure it.

Now I do assure you, Madam, that all these sprightly effusions of mine stand entirely clear of the charge of premeditation, and that I never entered upon a business of this kind with more simplicity in my life. I determined, before I began, to lay aside all attempts of the kind I have just mentioned; and being perfectly free from the fetters that self-conceit, commonly called bashfulness, fastens upon the mind, am, as you see, surprisingly brilliant.

My principal design is to thank you in the plainest terms, which always afford the best proof of a man's sincerity, for your obliging

present. The seeds will make a figure hereafter in the stove of a much greater man than myself, who am a little man, with no stove at all. Some of them, however, I shall raise for my own amusement, and keep them, as long as they can be kept, in a bark heat, which I give them all the year; and in exchange for those I part with, I shall receive such exotics as are not too delicate for a green-house.

I will not omit to tell you, what, no doubt, you have heard already, though, perhaps, you have never made the experiment, that leaves gathered at the fall are found to hold their heat much longer than bark, and are preferable in every respect. Next year, I intend to use them myself. I mention it, because Mr. Hill told me, some time since, that he was building a stove, in which, I suppose, they will succeed much better than in a frame.

I beg to thank you again, Madam, for the

very fine salmon you was so kind as to favour me with, which has all the sweetness of a Hertfordshire trout, and resembles it so much in flavour, that, blindfold, I should not have known the difference.

I beg, Madam, you will accept all these thanks, and believe them as sincere as they really are. Mr. Hill knows me well enough to be able to vouch for me, that I am not over-much addicted to compliments and fine speeches; nor do I mean either the one or the other, when I assure you that I am, dear Madam, not merely for his sake, but your own,

Your most obedient
and affectionate servant,
W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 25, 1781.

He that tells a long story should take care that it be not made a long story by his manner of telling it. His expression should be natural, and his method clear; the incidents should be interrupted by very few reflections, and parentheses should be entirely discarded. I do not know that poor Mr. Teedon guides himself in the affair of story-telling by any one of these rules, or by any rule indeed that I ever heard of. He has just left us, after a long visit, the greatest part of which he spent in the narration of a certain detail of facts that might have been compressed into a much smaller compass, and my attention to which has wearied and worn out all my spirits. You know how scrupulously nice he is in the choice of his expression; an exactness that soon becomes

very inconvenient both to speaker and hearer, where there is not a great variety to choose out of. But Saturday evening is come, the time I generally devote to my correspondence with you; and Mrs. Unwin will not allow me to let it pass without writing, though, having done it herself, both she and you might well spare me upon the present occasion.

I have not yet read your extract from Mr. Scott's letter to Mr. R ——, though I have had an opportunity to do it. I thought it might be better to wait a little, in hope that there might be no need to do it at all. If hereafter it should be necessary to inform him of Mr. Scott's feelings and sentiments upon the subject, I will readily perform the office, and accompany the performance of it with such advice of my own, and such reasons, as may happen to occur. In the mean time, I am a little apprehensive that opposition may provoke opposition in return, and set a

sharper edge upon inclination, already sufficiently whetted to the business.

We are not the proper persons to give counsel or direction to Mr. Scott; our acquaintance with him is of too short a standing to warrant us in the use of such a liberty. But it is our joint opinion that he will not find himself easily and comfortably settled at Olney while he retains the curacy at Weston. The people of that parish are rather inclined to grumble; and, as we are informed, express some dissatisfaction on finding that they are to have but single service on the Sabbath; and the people here are not well pleased, though they will have the same number of ordinances as before, that they are not to have them at the same time. Some, perhaps, may find the alteration a real inconvenience; and others, who may not find it so, will be glad of an occasion to pretend one. His resignation of Weston would at once annihilate all these complaints, and would, besides,

place the Sunday evening service and the whole management of it entirely in his own hands, which, as it would prevent the possibility of any bickerings on the account of supernumerary speakers, we should think were a most desirable object. We are well aware that the vicinity of Weston to Ra'nstone is Mr. Scott's reason for still continuing to hold the former; but whether, when weighed in the balance against the mischiefs he may incur by doing it, it will be found a sufficient one, may be a matter deserving consideration. It can be no very difficult thing for his former people to reach him at Olney, though one mile will be added to their journey. If they really prefer him to their new minister, we think such a difficulty as that may be easily surmounted. Whether Mr. Scott's circumstances will afford the sacrifice, we do not know; but Mrs. Unwin thinks, and, if you ask me my opinion, I think so too, that if there be no other objection to the measure, he would do well to commit himself to

Providence for a supply. Mr. Browne's age, and the probability, nearly related, I suppose, to a certainty, that Mr. Scott will succeed him in the living, seems, of itself, to reduce that difficulty almost to nothing. My paper is so intolerably bad, as you may perceive by the running of the ink, that it has quite worn out my patience.

Notwithstanding my purpose to shake hands with the Muse, and take my leave of her for the present, we have already had a *tête-à-tête*, since I sent you the last production. I am as much, or rather more pleased with my new plan, than with any of the foregoing. I mean to give a short summary of the Jewish story, the miraculous interpositions in behalf of that people, their great privileges, their abuse of them, and their consequent destruction; and then, by way of comparison, such another display of the favours vouchsafed to this country, the similar ingratitude with which they have

requited them, and the punishment they have therefore reason to expect, unless reformation interpose to prevent it. *Expostulation* is its present title; but I have not yet found in the writing it, that facility and readiness without which I shall despair to finish it well, or indeed to finish it at all.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with love to Mrs. N.

Your ever affectionate,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 5, 1781.

Since writing is become one of my principal amusements, and I have already produced so many verses on subjects that entitle them to a hope that they may possibly be useful, I should be sorry to suppress them entirely, or to publish them to no purpose,

for want of that cheap ingredient, the name of the Author. If my name therefore will serve them in any degree, as a passport into the public notice, they are welcome to it; and Mr. Johnson will, if he pleases, announce me to the world by the stile and title of

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.
Of the Inner Temple.

If you are of my mind, I think *Table Talk* will be the best to begin with, as the subjects of it are perhaps more popular; and one would wish, at first setting out, to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as fast as possible, that they may be willing to hear one, on a second and a third occasion.

The passage you object to I inserted merely by way of catch, and think that it is not unlikely to answer the purpose. My design was to say as many serious things as I could, and yet to be as lively as was compatible

with such a purpose. Do not imagine that I mean to stickle for it as a pretty creature of my own that I am loth to part with—but I am apprehensive that without the sprightliness of that passage to introduce it, the following paragraph would not show to advantage.—If the world had been filled with men like yourself, I should never have written it; but thinking myself in a measure obliged to tickle, if I meant to please, I therefore affected a jocularity I did not feel.—As to the rest, wherever there is war, there is misery and outrage; notwithstanding which it is not only lawful to wish, but even a duty to pray for the success of one's country. And as to the neutralities, I really think the Russian virago an impertinent puss for meddling with us, and engaging half a score kittens of her acquaintance to scratch the poor old lion, who, if he has been insolent in his day, has probably acted no otherwise than they themselves would have acted in his cir-

cumstances, and with his power to embolden them.

I am glad that the myrtles reached you safe, but am persuaded from past experience that no management will keep them long alive in London, especially in the city. Our own English Trots, the natives of the country, are for the most part too delicate to thrive there, much more the nice Italian. To give them, however, the best chance they can have, the lady must keep them well watered, giving them a moderate quantity in summer time every other day, and in winter about twice a week; not spring-water, for that would kill them. At Michaelmas, as much of the mould as can be taken out without disturbing the roots must be evacuated, and its place supplied with fresh, the lighter the better. And once in two years the plants must be drawn out of their pots with the entire ball of earth about them, and the matted

roots pared off with a sharp knife, when they must be planted again with an addition of rich light earth as before. Thus dealt with, they will grow luxuriantly in a green-house, where they can have plenty of sweet air, which is absolutely necessary to their health. I used to purchase them at Covent-garden almost every year, when I lived in the Temple; but even in that airy situation they were sure to lose their leaf in winter, and seldom recovered it again in spring. I wish them a better fate at Hoxton.

Olney has seen this day what it never saw before, and what will serve it to talk of, I suppose, for years to come. At eleven o'clock this morning, a party of soldiers entered the town, driving before them another party, who, after obstinately defending the bridge for some time, were obliged to quit it, and run. They ran in very good order, frequently faced about and fired, but were at last obliged to surren-

der prisoners of war. There has been much drumming and shouting, much scampering about in the dirt, but not an inch of lace made in the town, at least at the Silver End of it.

It is our joint request that you will not again leave us unwritten to for a fortnight. We are so like yourselves in this particular, that we cannot help ascribing so long a silence to the worst cause. The longer your letters the better, but a short one is better than none.

Mrs. Unwin is pretty well, and adds the greetings of her love to mine.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1781.

A slight disorder in my eye may possibly prevent my writing you a long letter, and would perhaps have prevented my writing at all, if I had not known that you account a fortnight's silence a week too long.

I am sorry that I gave you the trouble to write twice upon so trivial a subject as the passage in question. I did not understand by your first objections to it, that you thought it so exceptionable as you do; but being better informed, I immediately resolved to expunge it, and subjoin a few lines which you will oblige me by substituting in its place. I am not very fond of weaving a political thread into any of my pieces, and that for two reasons: first, because I do not think myself qualified, in point of intelligence, to form a decided opi-

nion on any such topics; and secondly, because I think them, though perhaps as popular as any, the most useless of all. The following verses are designed to succeed immediately after

——— fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward *his* mem'ry, dear to ev'ry Muse, &c.*

I am obliged to you for your advice with respect to the manner of publication, and feel myself inclined to be determined by it. So far as I have proceeded on the subject of *Expostulation*, I have written with tolerable ease to myself, and in my own opinion (for an opinion I am obliged to have about what I write, whether I will or no,) with more emphasis and energy than in either of the others. But it seems to

* Vide Poems, vol. I. p. 1; where, in the next line, the epithet *unshaken* is substituted for *the noblest*, in the letter.

open upon me with an abundance of matter, that forebodes a considerable length; and the time of year is come when, what with walking and gardening, I can find but little leisure for the pen. I mean, however, as soon as I have engrafted a new scion into the *Progress of Error*, instead of * * * *, and when I have transcribed *Truth*, and sent it to you, to apply myself to the composition last undertaken, with as much industry as I can. If therefore the three first are put into the press while I am spinning and weaving the last, the whole may perhaps be ready for publication before the proper season will be past. I mean at present that a few select smaller pieces, about seven or eight perhaps, the best I can find in a bookful that I have by me, shall accompany them. All together, they will furnish, I should imagine, a volume of tolerable bulk, that need not be indebted to an unreasonable breadth of margin for the importance of its figure.

If a Board of Enquiry were to be established, at which poets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives that induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to attend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few poets could, that though I have no objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should follow, they are not my aim; much less is it my ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer, with a bow—Amusement. There is nothing but this—no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, Poetry excepted—that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts, which, when I am not thus employed, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success, to make an amusement of it.

In my account of the battle fought at Olney, I laid a snare for your curiosity, and succeeded. I supposed it would have an enigmatical appearance, and so it had; but like most other riddles, when it comes to be solved, you will find that it was not worth the trouble of conjecture.—There are soldiers quartered at Newport and at Olney. These met, by order of their respective officers, in Emberton Marsh, performed all the manœuvres of a deedy battle, and the result was that this town was taken. Since I wrote, they have again encountered with the same intention; and Mr. R—— kept a room for me and Mrs. Unwin, that we might sit and view them at our ease. We did so, but it did not answer our expectation; for before the contest could be decided, the powder on both sides being expended, the combatants were obliged to leave it an undecided contest. If it were possible that when two great armies spend the night in expectation of a battle, a third could silently steal away their ammunition

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and arms of every kind, what a comedy would it make of that which always has such a tragical conclusion!

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 8, 1781.

Since I commenced author, my letters are even less worth your acceptance than they were before. I shall soon, however, lay down the character, and cease to trouble you with directions to a printer, at least till the summer is over. If I live to see the return of winter, I may perhaps assume it again; but my appetite for fame is not keen enough to combat with my love of fine weather, my love of indolence, and my love of gardening employments.

I send you by Mr. Old my Works complete, bound in brown paper, and numbered according to the series in which I would have them published. With respect to the poem called *Truth*, it is *so* true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or, if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it would be still more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for a preface to the whole. I wish you, however, to consult your own judgment upon the occasion, and to engage in either of these works, or neither, just as your discretion guides you.

I have written a great deal to-day, which must

be my excuse for an abrupt conclusion. Our love attends you both. We are in pretty good health; Mrs. Unwin indeed better than usual: and as to me, I ail nothing but the incurable ailment.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Thanks for the cocoa-nut.

I send a cucumber, not of my own raising, and yet raised by me.

Solve this enigma, dark enough
To puzzle any brains
That are not downright puzzle-proof,
And eat it for your pains.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Monday, April 23, 1781.

Having not the least doubt of your ability to execute just such a preface as I should wish to see prefixed to my publication, and being convinced that you have no good foundation for those which you yourself entertain upon the subject, I neither withdraw my requisition, nor abate one jot of the earnestness with which I made it. I admit the delicacy of the occasion, but am far from apprehending that you will therefore find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in the appearance of my Poems, and much pleased by the alacrity with which you do it. Your favourable opinion of them affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I

make allowances for your partiality to me and mine, because mine, yet I am sure you would not suffer me unadmonished to add myself to the multitude of insipid rhimers, with whose productions the world is already too much pestered.

It is worth while to send *you* a riddle, you make such a variety of guesses, and turn and tumble it about with such an industrious curiosity. The solution of that in question is—let me see; it requires some consideration to explain it, even though I made it. I raised the seed that produced the plant that produced the fruit, that produced the seed that produced the fruit I sent you. This latter seed I gave to the gardener of Terningham, who brought me the cucumber you mention. Thus you see I raised it—that is to say, I raised it virtually by having raised its progenitor; and yet I did not raise it, because the identical seed from which it grew was raised at a distance. You observe I did not speak rashly, when I spoke of it as dark enough to pose

an Œdipus; and have no need to call your own sagacity in question for falling short of the discovery.

A report has prevailed at Olney that you are coming in a fortnight; but taking it for granted that you know best when you shall come, and that you will make us happy in the same knowledge as soon as you are possessed of it yourself, I did not venture to build any sanguine expectations upon it.

I have at last read the second volume of Mr. ——'s work, and had some hope that I should prevail with myself to read the first likewise. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second; but I had not so good an appetite as a soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed when I lived in London, would for a small matter eat up a cat alive, beginning at her tail and finishing with her whiskers.

Yours *ut semper*,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 28, 1781.

I am much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my *Table Talk*, and wish that my *vivâ voce* Table Talk could repay you for the trouble you have had with the written one.

The season is wonderfully improved within this day or two; and if these cloudless skies are continued to us, or rather if the cold winds do not set in again, promises you a pleasant excursion, as far, at least, as the weather can conduce to make it such. You seldom complain of too much sunshine, and if you are prepared for an heat somewhat like that of Africa, the south walk in our long garden will exactly suit you. Reflected from the gravel, and from the walls, and beating upon your head at the same time, it may possibly make you wish you

could enjoy for an hour or two that immensity of shade afforded by the gigantic trees still growing in the land of your captivity. If you could spend a day now and then in those forests, and return with a wish to England, it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non homini datæ*. The time will come perhaps (but death must come first) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.

Miss Catlett must not think of any other lodging than we can without any inconvenience, as we shall with all possible pleasure, furnish her with. We can each of us say—that is, I can say it in Latin, and Mrs. Unwin in English—*Nihil tui à me alienum puto.*

Having two more letters to write, I find myself obliged to shorten this; so once more wishing you a good journey, and ourselves the happiness of receiving you in good health and spirits,

I remain

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 7, 1781.

Mr. Old brought us the acceptable news of your safe arrival. My sensations at your departure were far from pleasant, and Mrs. Unwin suffered more upon the occasion than when you first took leave of Olney. When we shall meet again, and in what circumstances, or whether we shall meet or not, is an article to be found no where but in that volume of Providence which belongs to the current year, and will not be understood till it is accomplished. This I know, that your visit was most agreeable here. It was so even to me, who, though I live in the midst of many agreeables, am but little sensible of their charms. But when you came, I determined, as much as possible, to be deaf to the suggestions of despair; that if I could

contribute but little to the pleasure of the opportunity, I might not dash it with unseasonable melancholy, and, like an instrument with a broken string, interrupt the harmony of the concert.

Lady Austen, waving all forms, has paid us the first visit; and not content with showing us that proof of her respect, made handsome apologies for her intrusion. We returned the visit yesterday. She is a lively, agreeable woman; has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labour at it.

I had rather submit to chastisement now, than be obliged to undergo it hereafter. If Johnson, therefore, will mark with a marginal Q, those lines that he or his object to as not sufficiently finished, I will willingly re-

touch them, or give a reason for my refusal. I shall moreover think myself obliged by any hints of that sort, as I do already to somebody, who, by running here and there two or three paragraphs into one, has very much improved the arrangement of my matter. I am apt, I know, to fritter it into too many pieces, and, by doing so, to disturb that order to which all writings must owe their perspicuity, at least in a considerable measure. With all that carefulness of revisal I have exercised upon the sheets as they have been transmitted to me, I have been guilty of an oversight, and have suffered a great fault to escape me, which I shall be glad to correct, if not too late.

In the *Progress of Error*, a part of the Young Squire's apparatus, before he yet enters upon his travels, is said to be

—— Memorandum-book to minute down
The several posts, and where the chaise broke down.

Here, the reviewers would say, is not only "down", but "down derry down" into the bargain, the word being made to rhime to itself. This never occurred to me till last night, just as I was stepping into bed. I should be glad, however, to alter it thus—

> With memorandum-book for every town,
> And ev'ry inn, and where the chaise broke down.

I have advanced so far in *Charity*, that I have ventured to give Johnson notice of it, and his option whether he will print it now or hereafter. I rather wish he may choose the present time, because it will be a proper sequel to *Hope*, and because I am willing to think it will embellish the collection.

Whoever means to take my phiz will find himself sorely perplexed in seeking for a fit occasion. That I shall not give him one, is certain; and if he steals one, he must be as cunning and quick-sighted a thief as Au-

tolycus himself. His best course will be to draw a face, and call it mine, at a venture. They who have not seen me these twenty years will say, It may possibly be a striking likeness now, though it bears no resemblance to what he was: time makes great alterations. They who know me better will say, perhaps, Though it is not perfectly the thing, yet there is somewhat of the cast of his countenance.. If the nose was a little longer, and the chin a little shorter, the eyes a little smaller, and the forehead a little more protuberant, it would be just the man. And thus, without seeing me at all, the artist may represent me to the public eye, with as much exactness as yours has bestowed upon you, though, I suppose, the original was full in his view when he made the attempt.

We are both as well as when you left us. Our hearty affections wait upon yourself and

Mrs. Newton, not forgetting Euphrosyne, the laughing lady.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 22, 1781.

I am sensible of your difficulties in finding opportunities to write; and therefore, though always desirous and sometimes impatient to hear from you, am never peevish when I am disappointed.

Johnson having begun to print, has given me some sort of security for his perseverance; else, the tardiness of his operations would almost tempt me to despair of the end. He has, indeed, time enough before him; but that very circumstance is sometimes a snare, and

gives occasion to delays that cannot be remedied. Witness the hare in the fable, who fell asleep in the midst of the race, and waked not till the tortoise had won the prize.

Taking it for granted that the new marriage-bill would pass, I took occasion, in the Address to Liberty, to celebrate the joyful æra; but in doing so afforded another proof that poets are not always prophets, for the House of Lords have thrown it out. I am, however, provided with four lines to fill up the gap, which I suppose it will be time enough to insert when the copy is sent down. I am in the middle of an affair called *Conversation*, which, as *Table Talk* serves in the present volume by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I design shall perform the same office in a second.

Sic brevi fortes jaculamur ævo.

You cannot always find time to write, and

I cannot always write a great deal; not for want of time, but for want of something equally requisite; perhaps materials, perhaps spirits, or perhaps more frequently for want of ability to overcome an indolence that I have sometimes heard even you complain of.

Yours, my dear sir, and Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

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TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, August 1781.

Though much obliged to you for the favour of your last, and ready enough to acknowledge the debt, the present, however, is not a day in which I should have chosen to pay it. A dejection of mind, which perhaps may be removed by to-morrow, rather disqualifies me for writing,—a business I would always perform in good spirits, because me-

lancholy is catching, especially where there is much sympathy to assist the contagion. But certain poultry, which I understand are about to pay their respects to you, have advertised for an agreeable companion, and I find myself obliged to embrace the opportunity of going to town with them in that capacity.

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While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it by the nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most obsequious followers? It can ring the changes upon the same things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be white or black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watches or one, is of little consequence. There is indeed an appearance of variety; but the folly and vanity that dictates and adopts the change, are invariably the same. When the fashions of a particular period appear more reasonable than those of the preceding, it is

not because the world is grown more reasonable than it was; but because in a course of perpetual changes, some of them must sometimes happen to be for the better. Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that prevail at present, a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, perhaps next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrella, and give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree cudgel instead of it: and when he has done so, will he be wiser than now? By no means. The love of change will have betrayed him into a propriety, which, in reality, he has no taste for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that, being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another.

In a note I received from Johnson last week, he expresses a wish that my pen may be still employed. Supposing it possible that he would yet be glad to swell the volume, I

have given him an order to draw upon me for eight hundred lines, if he chooses it; *Conversation*, a piece which I think I mentioned in my last to Mr. Newton, being finished. If Johnson sends for it, I shall transcribe it as soon as I can, and transmit it to Charles-square. Mr. Newton will take the trouble to forward it to the press. It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to *Table Talk*, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when he endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the jocular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.

We felt ourselves not the less obliged to you for the cocoa-nuts, though they were good for

nothing. They contained nothing but a putrid liquor with a round white lump, which in taste and substance much resembled tallow, and was of the size of a small walnut. Nor am I the less indebted to your kindness for the fish, though none is yet come.

Yours, dear Madam,

Most affectionately,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 16, 1781.

I might date my letter from the green-house, which we have converted into a summer parlour. The walls hung with garden mats, and the floor covered with a carpet, the sun too in a great measure excluded, by an awning of mats which forbids him to shine any where except upon the carpet, it affords us by far the pleasantest retreat in Olney. We eat, drink,

and sleep, where we always did; but here we spend all the rest of our time, and find that the sound of the wind in the trees, and the singing of birds, are much more agreeable to our ears than the incessant barking of dogs and screaming of children. It is an observation that naturally occurs upon the occasion, and which many other occasions furnish an opportunity to make, that people long for what they have not, and overlook the good in their possession. This is so true in the present instance, that for years past I should have thought myself happy to enjoy a retirement even less flattering to my natural taste than this in which I am now writing; and have often looked wistfully at a snug cottage, which, on account of its situation at a distance from noise and disagreeable objects, seemed to promise me all I could wish or expect, so far as happiness may be said to be local; never once adverting to this comfortable nook, which affords me all that could be found in the most seques-

tered hermitage, with the advantage of having all those accommodations near at hand which no hermitage could possibly afford me. People imagine they should be happy in circumstances which they would find insupportably burthensome in less than a week. A man that has been clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, envies the peasant under a thatched hovel; who, in return, envies him as much his palace and his pleasure-ground. Could they change situations, the fine gentleman would find his ceilings were too low, and that his casements admitted too much wind; that he had no cellar for his wine, and no wine to put in his cellar. These, with a thousand other mortifying deficiencies, would shatter his romantic project into innumerable fragments in a moment. The clown, at the same time, would find the accession of so much unwieldy treasure an incumbrance quite incompatible with an hour's ease. His choice would be puzzled by variety. He would drink

to excess, because he would foresee no end of his abundance; and he would eat himself sick for the same reason. He would have no idea of any other happiness than sensual gratification; would make himself a beast, and die of his good fortune. The rich gentleman had, perhaps, or might have had, if he pleased, at the shortest notice, just such a recess as this; but if he had it, he overlooked it, or, if he had it not, forgot that he might command it whenever he would. The rustic too, was actually in possession of some blessings, which he was a fool to relinquish, but which he could neither see nor feel, because he had the daily and constant use of them; such as good health, bodily strength, a head and a heart that never ached, and temperance, to the practice of which he was bound by necessity, that, humanly speaking, was a pledge and a security for the continuance of them all.

Thus I have sent you a school-boy's theme.

When I write to you, I do not write without thinking, but always without premeditation: the consequence is, that such thoughts as pass through my head when I am not writing, make the subject of my letters to you.

Johnson sent me lately a sort of apology for his printer's negligence, with his promise of greater diligence for the future. There was need enough of both. I have received but one sheet since you left us. Still, indeed, I see that there is time enough before us; but I see likewise that no length of time can be sufficient for the accomplishment of a work that does not go forward. I know not yet whether he will add *Conversation* to those poems already in his hands, nor do I care much. No man ever wrote such quantities of verse, as I have written this last year, with so much indifference about the event, or rather, with so little ambition of public praise. My pieces are such as may possibly be made useful. The more they are approved, the more

likely they are to spread, and consequently the more likely to attain the end of usefulness; which, as I said once before, except my present amusement, is the only end I propose. And even in the pursuit of this purpose, commendable as it is in itself, I have not the spur I should once have had;—my labour must go unrewarded, and as Mr. R —— once said, I am raising a scaffold before a house that others are to live in, and not I.

I have left myself no room for politics, which I thought, when I began, would have been my principal theme.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 21, 1781.

You wish you could employ your time to better purpose, yet are never idle. In all that you say or do; whether you are alone, or pay visits, or receive them; whether you think or write, or walk or sit still; the state of your mind is such as discovers even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at bottom whose determined tendency is towards the best things. I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, when you complain of that crowd of trifling thoughts that pesters you without ceasing; but then you always have a serious thought standing at the door of your imagination, like a justice of peace with the riot-act in his hand, ready to read it, and disperse the mob. Here lies the difference between you and me. My thoughts are clad in a sober livery, for the most part as grave as that

of a bishop's servants. They turn too upon spiritual subjects, but the tallest fellow and the loudest amongst them all, is he who is continually crying with a loud voice, *Actum est de te, periisti.* You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but however earnestly invited, it is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity with which time escapes me. Every thing around us, and every thing that befalls us, constitutes a variety, which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity, and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled address, that even while we say they are here, they are gone. From infancy to manhood is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose, because at that time we act under the control of others, and are not suffered to have a

will of our own.* But thence downward into the vale of years, is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom.

Here is a new scene opening, which, whether it perform what it promises or not, will add fresh plumes to the wings of time; at least while it continues to be a subject of contemplation. If the project take effect, a thousand varieties will attend the change it will make in our situation at Olney. If not, it will serve, however, to speculate and converse upon, and steal away many hours, by engaging our attention, before it be entirely dropped. Lady Austen, very desirous of retirement, especially of a retirement near her sister, an admirer of Mr. Scott as a preacher, and of your two humble servants now in the green-house, as the most agreeable creatures in the world, is at present

determined to settle here. That part of our great building which is at present occupied by Dick Coleman, his wife, child, and a thousand rats, is the corner of the world she chooses, above all others, as the place of her future residence. Next spring twelvemonth she begins to repair and beautify, and the following winter (by which time the lease of her house in town will determine) she intends to take possession. I am highly pleased with the plan, upon Mrs. Unwin's account, who, since Mrs. Newton's departure, is destitute of all female connexion, and has not, in any emergency, a woman to speak to. Mrs. Scott is indeed in the neighbourhood, and an excellent person, but always engaged by a close attention to her family, and no more than ourselves a lover of visiting. But these things are all at present in the clouds. Two years must intervene, and in two years not only this project, but all the projects in Europe may be disconcerted.

Cocoa-nut naught,
Fish too dear,
None must be bought
For us that are here,

No lobster on earth,
That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait
Till fish can be got
At a reas'nable rate,
Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
And as oft as you please.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 25, 1781.

By Johnson's last note (for I have received a packet from him since I wrote last to you) I am ready to suspect that you have seen him, and endeavoured to quicken his proceedings. His assurance of greater expedition leads me to think so. I know little of booksellers and printers, but have heard from others that they are the most dilatory of all people; otherwise, I am not in a hurry, nor would be so troublesome: but am obliged to you nevertheless for your interference, if his promised alacrity be owing to any spur that you have given him. He chooses to add *Conversation* to the rest, and says he will give me notice when he is ready for it; but I shall send it to *you* by the first opportune conveyance, and beg you to deliver it over to him. He wishes me not to be afraid of making the volume too

large; by which expression I suppose he means, that if I had still another piece, there would be room for it. At present I have not, but am in the way to produce another, *faveat modò Musa.* I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called *Rêtirement.* My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and the follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves, by a life of pleasure, for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin; but if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this

likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me.

I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noted three such, all which I have reduced into better order. In the foregoing sheet, I assented to his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement.

Yours,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, . . Sept. 9, 1781.

I am not willing to let the post set off without me, though I have nothing material to put into his bag. I am writing in the greenhouse, where my myrtles, ranged before the windows, make the most agreeable blind imaginable; where I am undisturbed by noise, and where I see none but pleasing objects. The situation is as favourable to my purpose as I could wish; but the state of my mind is not so, and the deficiencies I feel there are not to be remedied by the stillness of my retirement, or the beauty of the scene before me. I believe it is in part owing to the excessive heat of the weather, that I find myself so much at a loss when I attempt either verse or prose: my animal spirits are depressed, and dulness is the consequence. That dulness, however, is all at your service; and the portion of it that is neces-

sary to fill up the present epistle, I send you without the least reluctance.

I am sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Occiduus is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Austen has been at his sabbatical concerts, which, it seems, are composed of song-tunes and psalm-tunes indiscriminately; music without words—and I suppose one may say, consequently, without devotion. On a certain occasion, when her niece was sitting at her side, she asked his opinion concerning the lawfulness of such amusements as are to be found at Vauxhall or Ranelagh; meaning only to draw from him a sentence of disapprobation, that Miss Green might be the better reconciled to the restraint under which she was held, when she found it warranted by the judgment of so famous a divine. But she was disappointed: he accounted them innocent, and recommended them as useful. Curiosity, he said, was natural to young persons;

and it was wrong to deny them a gratification which they might be indulged in with the greatest safety; because the denial being unreasonable, the desire of it would still subsist. It was but a walk, and a walk was as harmless in one place as another; with other arguments of a similar import, which might have proceeded with more grace, at least with less offence, from the lips of a sensual layman. He seems, together with others of our acquaintance, to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music. The lawfulness of it, when used with moderation, and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding, than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the

performance of it, which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same.

Mr. M——, though a simple, honest, good man—such, at least, he appears to us—is not likely to give general satisfaction. He preaches the truth, it seems, but not the whole truth; and a certain member of that church, who signed the letter of invitation, which was conceived in terms sufficiently encouraging, is likely to prove one of his most strenuous opposers. The little man, however, has an independent fortune, and has nothing to do but to trundle himself away to some other place, where he may find hearers, neither so nice nor so wise as we are at Olney.

Yours, my dear Sir,

With our united love,

W. C.

## TO MRS. NEWTON.

Sep. 16, 1781.

A noble theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oys*ters*.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;
For when the messenger whom we dispatch'd
Enquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd;
Denying that his waggon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which, your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanced to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says, (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will,)
That what we call the Diligence, be-case
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift;

And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days,—the price the same;
For though it will not carry or convey
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you may,
For oysters bred upon the salt sea shore,
Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night;
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the show'r;
But walking, running, and with much ado,
Got home—just time enough to be wet through.
Yet both are well, and, wond'rous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, Adieu!

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Greenhouse, Sept. 18, 1781.

I return your preface, with many thanks for so affectionate an introduction to the public. I have observed nothing that in my judgment required alteration, except a single sentence in the first paragraph, which I have not obliterated, that you may restore it, if you please, by obliterating my interlineation. My reason for proposing an amendment of it was, that your meaning did not immediately strike me, which therefore I have endeavoured to make more obvious. The rest is what I would wish it to be. You say, indeed, more in my commendation, than I can modestly say of myself: but something will be allowed to the partiality of friendship, on so interesting an occasion.

I have no objection in the world to your conveying a copy to Dr. Johnson; though I well know that one of his pointed sarcasms, if he should happen to be displeased, would soon find its way into all companies, and spoil the sale. He writes, indeed, like a man that thinks a great deal, and that sometimes thinks religiously: but report informs me that he has been severe enough in his animadversions upon Dr. Watts, who was nevertheless, if I am in any degree a judge of verse, a man of true poètical ability; careless, indeed, for the most part, and inattentive too often to those niceties which constitute elegance of expression, but frequently sublime in his conceptions, and masterly in his execution. Pope, I have heard, had placed him once in the Dunciad; but, on being advised to read before he judged him, was convinced that he deserved other treatment, and thrust somebody's blockhead into the gap, whose name, consisting of a monosyllable, hap-

pened to fit it. Whatever faults, however, I may be chargeable with as a poet, I cannot accuse myself of negligence. I never suffer a line to pass till I have made it as good as I can; and though my doctrines may offend this king of critics, he will not, I flatter myself, be disgusted by slovenly inaccuracy, either in the numbers, rhimes, or language. Let the rest take its chance. It is possible he may be pleased; and if he should, I shall have engaged on my side one of the best trumpeters in the kingdom. Let him only speak as favourably of me as he has spoken of Sir Richard Blackmore (who, though he shines in his poem called Creation, has written more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country), and my success will be secured.

I have often promised myself a laugh with you about your pipe, but have always forgotten it when I have been writing, and at present I am not much in a laughing humour.

You will observe, however, for your comfort and the honour of that same pipe, that it hardly falls within the line of my censure. You never fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company; nor do you use it as an incentive to hard-drinking. Your friends, indeed, have reason to complain that it frequently deprives them of the pleasure of your own conversation while it leads you either into your study or your garden; but in all other respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away, therefore; and remember that if one poet has condemned the practice, a better than he (the witty and elegant Hawkins Browne) has been warm in the praise of it.

*Retirement* grows, but more slowly than any of its predecessors. Time was when I could with ease produce fifty, sixty, or seventy lines in a morning: now, I generally fall short of thirty, and am sometimes forced

to be content with a dozen. It consists at present, I suppose, of between six and seven hundred; so that there are hopes of an end, and I dare say Johnson will give me time enough to finish it.

I nothing add but this—that *still I am*
Your most affectionate and humble

WILLIAM.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 26, 1781.

I may, I suppose, congratulate you on your safe arrival at Brighthelmstone; and am the better pleased with your design to close the summer there, because I am acquainted with the place, and, by the assistance of fancy, can without much difficulty join myself to the party, and partake with you in your amusements and excursions. It happened singularly enough, that just before I received your last, in which

you apprise me of your intended journey, I had been writing upon the subject, having found occasion towards the close of my last poem, called *Retirement*, to take some notice of the modern passion for sea-side entertainments, and to direct to the means by which they might be made useful as well as agreeable. I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because, at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakspeare's characters says, — "I am never

merry when I hear sweet music." The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasing, nor without its use. So much for Signor Nettuno.

Lady Austen goes to London this day se'nnight. We have told her that you shall visit her; which is an enterprise you may engage in with the more alacrity, because as she loves every thing that has any connexion with your mother, she is sure to feel a sufficient partiality for her son. Add to this, that your own personal recommendations are by no means small, or such as a woman of her fine taste and discernment can possibly overlook. She has many features in her character which you will admire; but one, in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in

her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life, and, if report say true, is scarce indeed in the superior. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the smallest service. With these fine feelings, she has the most, and the most harmless vivacity you can imagine. In short, she is — what you will find her to be, upon half an hour's conversation with her; and when I hear you have a journey to town in contemplation, I will send you her address.

Your mother is well, and joins with me in wishing that you may spend your time agreeably upon the coast of Sussex.

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 3, 1781.

Your draft is worded for twenty pounds, and figured for twenty-one. I thought it more likely the mistake should be made in the figures than in the words, and have sent you a receipt accordingly. I am obliged to you for it, and no less bound to acknowledge your kindness in thinking for a man so little accustomed to think for himself. The result of my deliberations on the subject proposed is, that it will be better, on many accounts, to sell the chambers, and to deposit the money in the funds. Public credit wants a lift, and I would willingly shew my readiness to afford it one at so critical a juncture. If you can sell M —— at the same time, so as to turn him to any account, you have my free leave to do it. It has been a dry summer, and frogs may possibly be scarce, and fetch a good price; though how his frogship has attained to the honour of that appella-

tion, at this distance from the scene of his activity, I am not able to conjecture.

I hope you have had a pleasant vacation, and have laid in a fresh stock of health and spirits for the business of the approaching winter. As for me, I have just finished my last piece, called *Retirement;* which, as soon as it is fit to appear in public, shall, together with all the rest of its fraternity, lay itself at your feet.

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill and yourself.

Yours truly,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 4, 1781.

I generally write the day before the post, but yesterday had no opportunity, being obliged to employ myself in settling my greenhouse for the winter. I am now writing be-

fore breakfast, that I may avail myself of every inch of time for the purpose. N. B., An expression a critic would quarrel with, and call it by some hard name, signifying a jumble of ideas, and an unnatural match between time and space.

I am glad to be undeceived respecting the opinion I had been erroneously led into on the subject of Johnson's criticism on Watts. Nothing can be more judicious, or more characteristic of a distinguishing taste, than his observations upon that writer; though I think him a little mistaken in his notion, that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry, upon spiritual themes, in the aforesaid little Doctor. I perfectly acquiesce in the propriety of sending Johnson a copy of my productions; and I think it would be well to send it in our joint names, accom-

panied with a handsome card, such an one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favourable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper; for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration.

I forgot to tell you in my last, that I was well pleased with your proposed appearance in the title-page under the name of the editor. I do not care under how many names you appear in a book that calls me its author. In my last piece, which I finished the day before yesterday, I have told the public that I live upon the banks of the Ouse: that public is a great simpleton if it does not know that you live in London; it will consequently know that I had need of the assistance of some friend in town, and that I could have recourse to nobody with more propriety than yourself. I shall transcribe and submit to your approbation as fast as possible. I have now, I think,

finished my volume; indeed I am almost weary of composing, having spent a year in doing nothing else. I reckon my volume will consist of about eight thousand lines.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 14, 1781.

I would not willingly deprive you of any comfort, and, therefore would wish you to comfort yourself as much as you can with a notion that you are a more bountiful correspondent than I. You will give me leave in the mean time, however, to assert to myself a share in the same species of consolation, and to enjoy the flattering recollection that I have sometimes written three letters to your one. I never knew a poet, except myself, who was

punctual in any thing, or to be depended on for the due discharge of any duty, except what he thought he owed to the Muses. The moment a man takes it into his foolish head that he has what the world calls Genius, he gives himself a discharge from the servile drudgery of all friendly offices, and becomes good for nothing, except in the pursuit of his favourite employment. But I am not yet vain enough to think myself entitled to such self-conferred honours, and though I have sent much poetry to the press, or, at least, what I hope my readers will account such, am still as desirous as ever of a place in your heart, and to take all opportunities to convince you that you have still the same in mine. My attention to my poetical function has, I confess, a little interfered of late with my other employments, and occasioned my writing less frequently than I should have otherwise done. But it is over, at least for the present, and I think for some time to come. I have transcribed *Retirement*, and

send it. You will be so good as to forward it to Johnson, who will forward it, I suppose, to the public, in his own time; but not very speedily, moving as he does. The post brought me a sheet this afternoon, but we have not yet reached the end of *Hope*.

Mr. Scott, I perceive by yours to him, has mentioned one of his troubles, but I believe not the principal one. The question, whether he shall have an assistant at the great house in Mr. R.——, is still a question, or, at least, a subject of discontent, between Mr. Scott and the people. In a *tête-à-tête* I had with this candidate for the chair, in the course of the last week, I told him my thoughts upon the subject plainly; advised him to change places, by the help of fancy, with Mr. Scott, for a moment, and to ask himself how *he* would like a self-intruded deputy; advised him likewise by no means to address Mr. Scott any more upon the matter, for that he might be

sure he would never consent to it; and concluded with telling him, that if he persisted in his purpose of speaking to the people, the probable consequence would be, that, sooner or later, Mr. Scott would be forced out of the parish, and the blame of his expulsion would all light upon him. He heard, approved, and, I think the very next day, put all my good counsel to shame, at least, a considerable part of it, by applying to Mr. Scott, in company with Mr. P——, for his permission to speak at the Sunday evening lecture. Mr. Scott, as I had foretold, was immoveable; but offered, for the satisfaction of his hearers, to preach three times to them on the Sabbath, which he could have done, Mr. Jones having kindly offered, though without their knowledge, to officiate for him at Weston. Mr. R. answered, "That will not do, Sir; it is not what the people wish; they want variety." Mr. Scott replied very wisely, "If they do, they must be content without it; it is not my duty to

indulge that humour." This is the last intelligence I have had upon the subject. I received it not from Mr. Scott, but from an earwitness.

I did not suspect, till the Reviewers told me so, that you are made up of artifice and design, and that your ambition is to delude your hearers. Well — I suppose they please themselves with the thought of having mortified you; but how much are they mistaken! They shot at you, and their arrow struck the Bible, recoiling, of course, upon themselves. My turn will come, for I think I shall hardly escape a threshing.

Yours, my dear Sir,

And Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 22, 1781.

Mr. Bates, without intending it, has passed a severer censure upon the modern world of readers, than any that can be found in my volume. If they are so merrily disposed, in the midst of a thousand calamities, that they will not deign to read a preface of three or four pages, because the purport of it is serious, they are far gone indeed, and in the last stage of a frenzy, such as I suppose has prevailed in all nations that have been exemplarily punished, just before the infliction of the sentence. But though he lives in the world he has so ill an opinion of, and ought therefore to know it better than I, who have no intercourse with it at all, I am willing to hope that he may be mistaken. Curiosity is an universal passion. There are few people who think a

book worth their reading, but feel a desire to know something about the writer of it. This desire will naturally lead them to peep into the preface, where they will soon find that a little perseverance will furnish them with some information on the subject. If, therefore, your preface finds no readers, I shall take it for granted that it is because the book itself is accounted not worth their notice. Be that as it may, it is quite sufficient that I have played the antic myself for their diversion; and that, in a state of dejection such as they are absolute strangers to, I have sometimes put on an air of cheerfulness and vivacity, to which I myself am in reality a stranger, for the sake of winning their attention to more useful matter. I cannot endure the thought for a moment, that you should descend to my level on the occasion, and court their favour in a stile not more unsuitable to your function, than to the constant and consistent strain of your whole character and conduct. No—let the preface stand.

I cannot mend it. I could easily make a jest of it, but it is better as it is.

By the way—will it not be proper, as you have taken some notice of the modish dress I wear in *Table-Talk*, to include *Conversation* in the same description, which is (the first half of it, at least,) the most airy of the two? They will otherwise think, perhaps, that the observation might as well have been spared entirely; though I should have been sorry if it had, for when I am jocular I do violence to myself, and am therefore pleased with your telling them, in a civil way, that I play the fool to amuse them, not because I am one myself, but because I have a foolish world to deal with.

I am inclined to think that Mr. Scott will no more be troubled by Mr. R——, with applications of the sort I mentioned in my last. Mr. Scott, since I wrote that account, has related to us, himself, what passed in the course

of their interview; and, it seems, the discourse ended with his positive assurance, that he never would consent to the measure, though, at the same time, he declared he would never interrupt or attempt to suppress it. To which Mr. R—— replied, that unless he had his free consent, he should never engage in the office. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, in time, that part of the people, who may at present be displeased with Mr. Scott, for withholding his consent, will grow cool upon the subject, and be satisfied with receiving their instruction from their proper minister.

I beg you will, on no future occasion, leave a blank for Mrs. Newton, unless you have first engaged her promise to fill it; for thus we lose the pleasure of your company, without being indemnified for the loss, by the acquisition of hers. Our love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 7, 1781.

Having discontinued the practice of verse-making for some weeks, I now feel quite incapable of resuming it; and can only wonder at it, as one of the most extraordinary incidents in my life, that I should have composed a volume. Had it been suggested to me as a practicable thing, in better days, though I should have been glad to have found it so, many hindrances would have conspired to withhold me from such an enterprise. I should not have dared, at that time of day, to have committed my name to the public, and my reputation to the hazard of their opinion. But it is otherwise with me now. I am more indifferent about what may touch me in that point, than ever I was in my life. The stake that would then have seemed important, now seems trivial; and it is of little consequence to me,

who no longer feel myself possessed of what I accounted infinitely more valuable, whether the world's verdict shall pronounce me a poet, or an empty pretender to the title. This happy coldness towards a matter so generally interesting to all rhimers, left me quite at liberty for the undertaking, unfettered by fear, and under no restraints of that diffidence, which is my natural temper, and which would either have made it impossible for me to commence an author by name, or would have insured my miscarriage if I had. In my last dispatches to Johnson I sent him a new edition of the title-page, having discarded the Latin paradox which stood at the head of the former, and added a French motto to that from Virgil. It is taken from a volume of the excellent Caraccioli, called *Jouissance de soi-même*, and strikes me as peculiarly apposite to my purpose.

Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to

march hither, and faithfully told us it was in consequence of those orders that he came. He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott. Mr. R—— came in. Mr. Bull began, addressing himself to the former, My friend, you are in trouble; you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance. Mr. Scott replied, he had been so, but he was better. Come then, says Mr. Bull, I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less, and converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?—Thrice—Ay, there it is. Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too.—I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton.—You do well to follow his steps, in all other instances, but in this instance you are wrong, and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man

but himself could have used, so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should insure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you.

When he related to us this harangue, so nicely adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good, and as Jacques says,

"It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

Our love of you both, though often sent to London, is still with us. If it is not an inexhaustible well (there is but one love that can, with propriety, be called so,) it is, how-

ever, a very deep one, and not likely to fail while we are living.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 24, 1781.

News is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed in West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel yourself disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? No, say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old women frighten children, and teach children to frighten each other. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an apparition is an impossible thing. You

can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? Yes. Then I can tell you one.

You have heard, no doubt, of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead, and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood.—When Paul died, he left his lordship a legacy.* It was his heart, which was taken out of his body, and sent as directed. His friend having built a church, and, at that time just finished it, used it as a mausoleum upon this occasion; and having (as I think the newspapers told us at the time) erected an elegant pillar in the centre of it, on the summit of this pillar, enclosed in a golden urn, he placed the heart in question. But not as a lady places a china figure upon her mantle-tree, or on the top of her cabinet, but with much respectful ceremony, and all the forms of funeral solemnity. He hired the best singers and the best performers. He composed

an anthem for the purpose, he invited all the nobility and gentry in the country to assist at the celebration of these obsequies, and having formed them all into an august procession, marched to the place appointed at their head, and consigned the posthumous treasure, with his own hands, to its state of honourable elevation. Having thus, as he thought, and as he might well think, (* * * * *) appeased the manes of the deceased, he rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so,—about a week since I received a letter from a person, who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has appeared frequently of late, and that there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not seen him, sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house, by day and by night, indifferently. I make no reflection upon this incident, having other things to write about, and but little room.

I am much indebted to Mr. S—— for more franks, and still more obliged by the handsome note with which he accompanied them. He has furnished me sufficiently for the present occasion, and by his readiness, and obliging manner of doing it, encouraged me to have recourse to him, in case another exigence of the same kind should offer. A French author I was reading last night, says, He that has written, will write again. If the critics do not set their foot upon this first egg that I have laid, and crush it, I shall probably verify his observation; and when I feel my spirits rise, and that I am armed with industry sufficient for the purpose, undertake the production of another volume. At present, however, I do not feel myself so disposed; and, indeed, he that would write, should read, not that he may retail the observations of other men, but that, being thus refreshed and replenished, he may find himself in a condition to make and to produce his own.

I reckon it among my principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical, a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of somebody indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it; and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire. But enough of this.

Your mother, who is as well as the season of the year will permit, desires me to add her love.—The salmon you sent us arrived safe, and was remarkably fresh. What a comfort it is to have a friend who knows that we love salmon, and who cannot pass by a fishmonger's

shop, without finding his desire to send us some, a temptation too strong to be resisted!

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 26, 1781.

I thank you much for your letter, which, without obliging me to travel to Wargrave at a time of year when journeying is not very agreeable, has introduced me, in the most commodious manner, to a perfect acquaintance with your neat little garden, your old cottage, and, above all, your most prudent and sagacious landlady. As much as I admire her, I admire much more that philosophical temper with which you seem to treat her; for I know few characters more provoking, to me at least, than the selfish, who are never honest, especially if, while they determine to pick your pocket, they

have not ingenuity enough to conceal their purpose. But you are perfectly in the right, and act just as I would endeavour to do, on the same occasion. You sacrifice every thing to a retreat you admire, and if the natural indolence of my disposition did not forsake me, so would I.

You might as well apologize for sending me forty pounds, as for writing about yourself. Of the two ingredients, I hardly know which made your letter the most agreeable (observe, I do not say the most acceptable.) The draft, indeed, was welcome; but, though it was so, yet it did not make me laugh. I laughed heartily at the account you give me of yourself, and your landlady, Dame Saveall, whose picture you have drawn, though not with a flattering hand, yet, I dare say, with a strong resemblance. As to you, I have never seen so much of you since I saw you in London, where you and I have so often made ourselves merry with each other's humour, yet never gave each other a moment's

pain by doing so. We are both humourists, and it is well for your wife, and my Mrs. Unwin, that they have alike found out the way to deal with us.

More thanks to Mrs. Hill for her intentions. She has the true enthusiasm of a gardener, and I can pity her under her disappointment, having so large a share of that commodity myself.

Yours, my dear Sir, affectionately,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 27, 1781.

First Mr. Wilson, then Mr. Teedon, and lastly Mr. Whitford, each with a cloud of melancholy on his brow, and with a mouth wide open, have just announced to us this unwelcome intelligence from America. We

are sorry to hear it, and should be more cast down than we are, if we did not know that this catastrophe was ordained beforehand, and that therefore neither conduct, nor courage, nor any means that can possibly be mentioned, could have prevented it. If the King and his ministry can be contented to close the business here, and, taking poor Dean Tucker's advice, resign the Americans into the hands of their new masters, it may be well for Old England. But if they will still persevere, they will find it, I doubt, an hopeless contest to the last. Domestic murmurs will grow louder, and the hands of faction, being strengthened by this late miscarriage, will find it easy to set fire to the pile of combustibles they have been so long employed in building. These are my politics, and for aught I can see, you and we by our respective fire-sides, though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity

which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of kingdoms, can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight, as the greatest man in the cabinet.

Though when I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it, and though I have frequently since that time, both read and recollected it with the same approbation, I lately became uneasy upon the subject, and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal, and to dispose of it ultimately according to your sentence. I am glad you have condemned it, and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me, and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry,

or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book were burnt, than a single line guilty of such a tendency should escape me.

We thank you for two copies of your Address to your Parishioners. The first I lent to Mr. Scott, whom I have not seen since I put it into his hands. You have managed your subject well; have applied yourself to despisers and absentees of every description, in terms so expressive of the interest you take in their welfare, that the most wrong-headed person cannot be offended. We both wish it may have the effect you intend, and that prejudices and groundless apprehensions being removed, the immediate objects of your ministry may make a more considerable part of your congregation.

Yours, my dear Sir, as ever,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

[Fragment.]

MY DEAR FRIEND, Same date.

A visit from Mr. Whitford shortened one of your letters to me; and now the same cause has operated with the same effect upon one of mine to you. He is just gone; desired me to send his love, and talks of enclosing a letter to you in my next cover.

Literas tuas irato Sacerdoti scriptas, legi, perlegi, et ne verbum quidem mutandum censeo. Gratias tibi acturum si sapiat, existimo; sin aliter eveniat, amici tamen officium præstitisti, et te coram te vindicâsti.

I have not written in Latin to shew my scholarship, nor to excite Mrs. Newton's curiosity, nor for any other wise reason what-

ever; but merely because, just at that moment, it came into my head to do so.

I never wrote a copy of Mary and John* in my life, except that which I sent to you. It was one of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing, or just before I begin. I sent it to you, because to you I send any thing that I think may raise a smile; but should never have thought of multiplying

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*Note by the Editor.*

* The lines alluded to are the following, which appeared afterwards, somewhat varied, in the *Elegant Extracts in Verse* :—

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, oh! the claws and the scratches!
It can't be a match :—'tis a bundle of matches.

the impression. Neither did I ever repeat them to any one except Mrs. Unwin. The inference is fair and easy, that you have some friend who has a good memory.

This afternoon the maid opened the parlour-door, and told us there was a lady in the kitchen. We desired she might be introduced, and prepared for the reception of Mrs. Jones. But it proved to be a lady unknown to us, and not Mrs. Jones. She walked directly up to Mrs. Unwin, and never drew back till their noses were almost in contact. It seemed as if she meant to salute her. An uncommon degree of familiarity, accompanied with an air of most extraordinary gravity, made me think her a little crazy. I was alarmed, and so was Mrs. Unwin. She had a bundle in her hand —a silk handkerchief tied up at the four corners. When I found she was not mad, I took her for a smuggler, and made no doubt but she had brought samples of contraband

goods. But our surprise, considering the lady's appearance and deportment, was tenfold what it had been, when we found that it was Mary Philips's daughter, who had brought us a few apples by way of a specimen of a quantity she had for sale.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 2, 1781.

I thank you for the note. There is some advantage in having a tenant who is irregular in his payments: the longer the rent is withheld, the more considerable the sum when it arrives; to which we may add, that its arrival being unexpected, a circumstance that obtains always in a degree exactly in proportion to the badness of the tenant, is always sure to be the occasion of an agreeable surprise;

a sensation that deserves to be ranked among the pleasantest that belong to us.

I gave two hundred and fifty pounds for the chambers. Mr. Ashurst's receipt, and the receipt of the person of whom he purchased, are both among my papers; and when wanted, as I suppose they will be in case of a sale, shall be forthcoming at your order.

The conquest of America seems to go on but slowly. Our ill success in that quarter will oblige me to suppress two pieces that I was rather proud of. They were written two or three years ago; not long after the double repulse sustained by Mr. D'Estaing at Lucia and at Savannah, and when our operations in the western world wore a more promising aspect. Presuming, upon such promises, that I might venture to prophesy an illustrious consummation of the war, I did so. But my pre-

dictions proving false, the verse in which they were expressed must perish with them.

Since I began to write, I have searched all the papers I have, and cannot find the receipts above-mentioned. I hope, however, they are not essential to the validity of the transaction.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

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## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 4, 1781.

The present to the queen of France, and the piece addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, my only two political efforts, being of the predictive kind, and both falsified, or likely to be so, by the miscarriage of the royal cause in America, were already condemned when I re-

ceived your last.* I have a poetical epistle which I wrote last summer, and another poem

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* As the reader may yet wish to see the lines to Sir Joshua, the Editor extracts them from a letter to the Rev. William Unwin, of an earlier date. Those to the Queen of France are not in his possession.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine—
Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the Sisterhood:—We come—
Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints—
We come to furnish you with hints.

not yet finished, in stanzas, with which I mean to supply their places. Henceforth I have

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French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of the story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,
Fill'd up becomes a paper kite.
Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw *six-and-twenty rueful faces*,
Each with a staring, steadfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally.
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every flutt'ring sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.

Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confed'rate war.

done with politics. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene, that an event which appears probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labour, bestow his rhymes upon future contingencies, which perhaps are never to take place but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy. I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to

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Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home:
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round;
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavours. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice; and as that part of the present century was a season when clubs of a political character, and consequently political songs, were much in fashion, the best in that style, some written by Rowe, and I think some by Congreve, and many by other wits of the day, were proposed to my admiration. Being grown up, I became desirous of imitating such bright examples, and while I lived in the Temple produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular. What we learn in childhood we retain long; and the successes we met with, about three years ago, when D'Estaing was twice repulsed, once in America, and once in the West Indies, having set fire to my patriotic zeal once more, it discovered itself by the same symptoms, and produced effects much like those it had produced before. But, unhappily, the ardour I felt upon

the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact, pushed me upon uniting the prophetical with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose.—I am glad it did. The less there is of that sort in my book the better; it will be more consonant to your character, who patronise the volume, and, indeed, to the constant tenor of my own thoughts upon public matters, that I should exhort my countrymen to repentance, than that I should flatter their pirde—that vice for which, perhaps, they are even now so severely punished

We are glad, for Mr. Barham's sake, that he has been so happily disappointed. How little does the world suspect what passes in it every day!—that true religion is working the same wonders now as in the first ages of the church,—that parents surrender up their children into the hands of God, to die at his own appointed moment, and by what death he pleases, without a murmur, and receive them again as if by a

resurrection from the dead! The world, however, would be more justly chargeable with wilful blindness than it is, if all professors of the truth exemplified its power in their conduct as conspicuously as Mr. Barham.

Easterly winds, and a state of confinement within our own walls, suit neither me nor Mrs. Unwin; though we are both, to use the Irish term, rather unwell than ill.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Mrs. Madan is happy.—She will be found ripe, fall when she may.

We are sorry you speak doubtfully about a spring visit to Olney. Those doubts must not outlive the winter.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 17, 1781.

The poem I had in hand when I wrote last is on the subject of Friendship. By the following post I received a packet from Johnson. The proof-sheet it contained brought our business down to the latter part of *Retirement;* the next will consequently introduce the first of the smaller pieces. The volume consisting, at least four-fifths of it, of heroic verse as it is called, and graver matter, I was desirous to displace the Burning Mountain* from the post it held in the van of the light infantry, and throw it into the rear. Having finished *Friendship,* and fearing that if I delayed to send it, the press would get the start of my intention, and knowing perfectly that with respect to the subject,

* The poem afterwards entitled "*Heroism.*" Vide Poems, vol. I.

and the subject matter of it, it contained nothing that you would think exceptionable, I took the liberty to transmit it to Johnson, and hope that the next post will return it to me printed. It consists of between thirty and forty stanzas; a length that qualifies it to supply the place of the two cancelled pieces, without the aid of the Epistle I mentioned. According to the present arrangement, therefore, *Friendship*, which is rather of a lively cast, though quite sober, will follow next after *Retirement*; and *Ætna* will close the volume. Modern naturalists, I think, tell us that the volcano forms the mountain. I shall be charged therefore, perhaps, with an unphilosophical error in supposing that Ætna was once unconscious of intestine fires, and as lofty as at present before the commencement of the eruptions. It is possible, however, that the rule, though just in some instances, may not be of universal application; and if it be, I do not know that a poet is obliged to write with a

philosopher at his elbow, prepared always to bend down his imagination to mere matters of fact. You will oblige me by your opinion; and tell me, if you please, whether you think an apologetical note may be necessary; for I would not appear a dunce in matters that every Review reader must needs be apprized of. I say a note, because an alteration of the piece is impracticable; at least without cutting off its head, and setting on a new one; a task I should not readily undertake, because the lines which must, in that case, be thrown out, are some of the most poetical in the performance.

Possessing greater advantages, and being equally dissolute with the most abandoned of the neighbouring nations, we are certainly more criminal than they. They *cannot* see, and we *will* not. It is to be expected, therefore, that when judgment is walking through the earth, it will come commissioned with the heaviest tidings to the people chargeable with the most

perverseness. In the latter part of the Duke of Newcastle's administration, all faces gathered blackness. The people, as they walked the streets, had, every one of them, a countenance like what we may suppose to have been the prophet Jonah's, when he cried "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But our Nineveh too repented, that is to say, she was affected in a manner somewhat suitable to her condition. She was dejected; she learned an humbler language, and seemed, if she did not trust in God, at least to have renounced her confidence in herself. A respite ensued; the expected ruin was averted; and her prosperity became greater than ever. Again she became self-conceited and proud, as at the first; and how stands it with our Nineveh now? Even as you say; her distress is infinite, her destruction appears inevitable, and her heart as hard as the nether millstone. Thus, I suppose, it was when ancient Nineveh found herself agreeably disappointed; she turned the grace

of God into lasciviousness, and that flagrant abuse of mercy exposed her, at the expiration of forty years, to the complete execution of a sentence she had only been threatened with before. A similarity of events, accompanied by a strong similarity of conduct, seems to justify our expectations that the catastrophe will not be very different. But after all, the designs of Providence are inscrutable, and, as in the case of individuals, so in that of nations, the same causes do not always produce the same effects. The country indeed cannot be saved in its present state of profligacy and profaneness, but may, nevertheless, be led to repentance by means we are little aware of, and at a time when we least expect it.

Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton, and we rejoice that you feel no burthens but those you bear in common with the liveliest and most favoured Christians.—It is a happiness in poor Peggy's case that she can

swallow five shillings' worth of physic in a day, but a person must be in her case to be duly sensible of it.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I dare say I do not enter exactly into your idea of a present theocracy, because mine amounts to no more than the common one, that all mankind, though few are really aware of it, act under a providential direction, and that a gracious superintendence in particular, is the lot of those who trust in God. Thus I think respecting individuals, and with respect to the kingdoms of the earth, that perhaps by his own immediate operation, though more probably by the intervention of angels, (vide Daniel) the great Governor manages and

rules them, assigns them their origin, duration, and end, appoints them prosperity or adversity, glory or disgrace, as their virtues or their vices, their regard to the dictates of conscience and his word, or their prevailing neglect of both, may indicate and require. But in this persuasion, as I said, I do not at all deviate from the general opinion of those who believe a Providence, at least who have a scriptural belief of it. I suppose, therefore, you mean something more, and shall be glad to be more particularly informed.

I see but one feature in the face of our national concerns that pleases me;—the war with America, it seems, is to be conducted on a different plan. This is something; when a long series of measures, of a certain description, has proved unsuccessful, the adoption of others is at least pleasing, as it encourages a hope that they may possibly prove wiser, and more effectual: but, indeed, without discipline, all is lost. Pitt

himself could have done nothing with such tools; but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads, for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active.

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The shortest day, 1781.

I might easily make this letter a continuation of my last, another national miscarriage having furnished me with a fresh illustration of the remarks we have both been making. Mr. S——, who has most obligingly supplied me with franks throughout my whole concern with Johnson, accompanied the last parcel he sent me with a note dated from the House of Commons, in which he seemed happy

to give me the earliest intelligence of the capture of the French transports by Admiral Kempenfelt, and of a close engagement between the two fleets, so much to be expected. This note was written on Monday, and reached me by Wednesday's post; but, alas! the same post brought us the newspaper that informed us of his being forced to fly before a much superior enemy, and glad to take shelter in the port he had left so lately. This event, I suppose, will have worse consequences than the mere disappointment; will furnish opposition, as all our ill success has done, with the fuel of dissension, and with the means of thwarting and perplexing administration. Thus all we purchase with the many millions expended yearly, is distress to ourselves, instead of our enemies, and domestic quarrels, instead of victories abroad. It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us

reel and stagger, indeed, but the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees. That fall would save us; but if we fall upon our side at last, we are undone. So much for politics.

I enclose a few lines on a thought which struck me yesterday.* If you approve of them, you know what to do with them. I should think they might occupy the place of an introduction, and should call them by that name, if I did not judge the name I have given them necessary for the information of the reader. A flatting-mill is not met with in every street, and my book will, perhaps, fall into the hands of many who do not know that such a mill was ever invented. It happened to me, however, to spend much of my time in one, when

* The lines alluded to are entitled, "*The Flatting Mill, an Illustration.*" Vide Poems, vol. III.

I was a boy, when I frequently amused myself with watching the operation I describe.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The last day of 1781.

Yesterday's post, which brought me yours, brought me a packet from Johnson. We have reached the middle of the Mahometan Hog. By the way, your lines, which, when we had the pleasure of seeing you here, you said you would furnish him with, are not inserted in it. I did not recollect, till after I had finished the *Flatting Mill*, that it bore any affinity to the motto taken from Caraccioli. The resemblance, however, did not appear to me to give any impropriety to the verses, as the thought is much enlarged upon, and enlivened by the

addition of a new comparison. But if it is not wanted, it is superfluous, and if superfluous, better omitted.—I shall not bumble Johnson for finding fault with *Friendship*, though I have a better opinion of it myself; but a poet is, of all men, the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. But as there is a sufficient quantity without it, let that sleep too. If I should live to write again, I may possibly take up that subject a second time, and clothe it in a different dress. It abounds with excellent matter, and much more than I could find room for, in two or three pages.

I consider England and America as once one country. They were so, in respect of interest, intercourse, and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic ocean flows between them. He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores

together, so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet each other in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence, and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently a scourge to England; but is it a blessing to America? Time may prove it one, but at present it does not seem to wear an aspect favourable to their privileges, either civil, or religious. I cannot doubt the truth of Dr. W.'s assertion; but the French, who pay but little regard to treaties that clash with their convenience, without a treaty, and even in direct contradiction to verbal engagements, can easily pretend a claim to a country which they have both bled and paid for; and if the validity of that claim be disputed, behold an army ready landed, and well-appointed, and in possession of some of the most fruitful provinces, prepared to prove it. A scourge is a scourge at one end only. A bundle of thunderbolts, such as you have seen

in the talons of Jupiter's eagle, is at both ends equally tremendous, and can inflict a judgment upon the West, at the same moment that it seems to intend only the chastisement of the East.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1782.

I believe I did not thank you for your anecdotes, either foreign or domestic, in my last; therefore I do it now; and still feel myself, as I did at the time, truly obliged to you for them. More is to be learned from one matter of fact, than from a thousand speculations. But, alas! what course can Government take? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red-hot iron

with his naked hand, it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the colonies in the hands of administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them. I know not whether your sentiments and mine upon this part of the subject exactly coincide, but you will know, when you understand what mine are. It appears to me that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and to his people, to consider himself with respect to every inch of his territories, as a trustee deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or waste them, so he may not resign them to an enemy, or transfer his right to govern them to any, not even to themselves, so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest, and that of his other dominions. It may be said, suppose Providence has ordained that they

shall be wrested from him, how then? I answer, that cannot appear to be the case, till God's purpose is actually accomplished; and in the mean time the most probable prospect of such an event does not release him from his obligation to hold them to the last moment, for as much as adverse appearances are no infallible indication of God's designs, but may give place to more comfortable symptoms, when we least expect it. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on his Majesty's throne, I should be as obstinate as he, because if I quitted the contest, while I had any means left of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory answer to the doubts and enquiries of my own conscience.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

## TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 31, 1782.

Having thanked you for a barrel of very fine oysters, I should have nothing more to say, if I did not determine to say every thing that may happen to occur. The political world affords us no very agreeable subjects at present, nor am I sufficiently conversant with it, to do justice to so magnificent a theme, if it did. A man that lives as I do, whose chief occupation, at this season of the year, is to walk ten times in a day from the fire-side to his cucumber frame and back again, cannot shew his wisdom more, if he has any wisdom to shew, than by leaving the mysteries of government to the management of persons, in point of situation and information, much better qualified for the business. Suppose not, however, that I am perfectly an unconcerned spectator, or that I take

no interest at all in the affairs of my country; far from it—I read the news—I see that things go wrong in every quarter. I meet, now and then, with an account of some disaster that seems to be the indisputable progeny of treachery, cowardice, or a spirit of faction; I recollect that in those happier days, when you and I could spend our evening in enumerating victories and acquisitions, that seemed to follow each other in a continued series, there was some pleasure in hearing a politician; and a man might talk away upon so entertaining a subject, without danger of becoming tiresome to others, or incurring weariness himself. When poor Bob White brought me the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Conflans, I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture, when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec. I am not, therefore, I suppose, destitute of true patriotism, but the course of public events has, of late, afforded

me no opportunity to exert it. I cannot rejoice, because I see no reason, and I will not murmur, because for that I can find no good one. And let me add, he that has seen both sides of fifty, has lived to little purpose, if he has not other views of the world than he had when he was much younger. He finds, if he reflects at all, that it will be to the end, what it has been from the beginning, a shifting, uncertain, fluctuating scene; that nations, as well as individuals, have their seasons of infancy, youth, and age. If he be an Englishman, he will observe that ours, in particular, is affected with every symptom of decay, and is already sunk into a state of decrepitude. I am reading Mrs. M'Aulay's History. I am not quite such a superannuated simpleton, as to suppose that mankind were wiser or much better, when I was young, than they are now. But I may venture to assert, without exposing myself to the charge of dotage, that the men whose integrity, courage, and wisdom,

broke the bands of tyranny, established our constitution upon its true basis, and gave a people, overwhelmed with the scorn of all countries, an opportunity to emerge into a state of the highest respect and estimation, make a better figure in history than any of the present day are likely to do, when their pretty harangues are forgotten, and nothing shall survive but the remembrance of the views and motives with which they made them.

My dear friend, I have written at random, in every sense, neither knowing what sentiments I should broach, when I began, nor whether they would accord with yours. Excuse a rustic, if he errs on such a subject, and believe me sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 14, 1782.

As servant-maids, and such sort of folks, account a letter good for nothing, unless it begins with—This comes hoping you are well, as I am at this present: so I should be chargeable with a great omission, were I not to make frequent use of the following grateful exordium—Many thanks for a fine cod and oysters.—Your bounty never arrived more seasonably. I had just been observing that among other deplorable effects of the war, the scarcity of fish which it occasioned, was severely felt at Olney; but your plentiful supply immediately reconciled me, though not to the war, yet to my small share in the calamities it produces.

I hope my bookseller has paid due attention to the order I gave him to furnish you

with my books. The composition of those pieces afforded me an agreeable amusement at intervals, for about a twelvemonth; and I should be glad to devote the leisure hours of another twelvemonth to the same occupation; at least, if my lucubrations should meet with a favourable acceptance. But I cannot write when I would; and whether I shall find readers, is a problem not yet decided! So the Muse and I are parted for the present.

I sent Lord Thurlow a volume, and the following letter with it, which I communicate because you will undoubtedly have some curiosity to see it.*

Yours,

W. C.

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* For the letter to Lord Thurlow, see Cowper's Letters, vol. I. page 192.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 14, 1782.

I was not unacquainted with Mr. B—'s extraordinary case, before you favoured me with his letter and his intended dedication to the Queen, though I am obliged to you for a sight of those two curiosities, which I do not recollect to have ever seen till you sent them. I could, however, were it not a subject that would make us all melancholy, point out to you some essential differences between his state of mind and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair, if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy per-

suasion with as many instances as you please, of persons who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored; and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and therefore the blessed reverse, that others have experienced, affords no ground of comfortable expectation to *him*. But you will say, it is reasonable to conclude that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed at last, so will you:—I grant the reasonableness of it; it would be sinful, perhaps, because uncharitable, to reason otherwise; but an argument, hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and in this instance, so will yours. But I forbear. For the cause above mentioned, I will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail would carry. I must deal with you as I deal with poor Mrs.

Unwin, in all our disputes about it, cutting all controversy short by an appeal to the event.

W. C.

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## TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 22, 1782.

If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more, to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time,
I feel a wish, by cheerful rhyme
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I must confess,
It were but folly to suppress,)
His pleasure, or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.
But though the sun is flaming high
I' th' centre of yon arch, the sky,

And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him undeserved praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether, which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration,
I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw, through midnight vapour,
The glimm'ring of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
T' accelerate a creeping pen!
Oh for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco, finely mill'd,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses.

Oh Nymph of Transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or list'ning with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverized it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, touch'd with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the Bard, if Bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;
So may no blight infest thy plains,
And no unseasonable rains,
And so may smiling Peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou, secure from all alarms,
Of thund'ring drums, and glitt'ring arms,

Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries encrease,
And fumigation never cease.
May Newton with renew'd delights
Perform thine odorif'rous rites,
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine;
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling, never full.

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 6, 1782.

Yesterday, and not before, I received your letter, dated the 11th of June, from the hands of Mr. Small. I should have been happy to have known him sooner; but whether being afraid of that horned monster, a Methodist, or whether from a principle of delicacy, or deter-

red by a flood, which has rolled for some weeks between Clifton and Olney, I know not,—he has favoured me only with a taste of his company, and will leave me, on Saturday evening, to regret that our acquaintance, so lately begun, must be so soon suspended. He will dine with us that day, which I reckon a fortunate circumstance, as I shall have an opportunity to introduce him to the liveliest and most entertaining woman in the country. I have seen him but for half an hour, yet, without boasting of much discernment, I see that he is polite, easy, cheerful, and sensible. An old man thus qualified, cannot fail to charm the lady in question. As to his religion, I leave it—I am neither his bishop nor his confessor. A man of his character, and recommended by you, would be welcome here, were he a Gentoo, or a Mahometan.

I learn from him that certain friends of mine, whom I have been afraid to enquire about by letter, are alive and well. The cur-

rent of twenty years has swept away so many, whom I once knew, that I doubted whether it might be advisable to send my love to your mother and your sisters. They may have thought my silence strange, but they have here the reason of it. Assure them of my affectionate remembrance, and that nothing would make me happier than to receive you all in my green-house, your own Mrs. Hill included. It is fronted with myrtles, and lined with mats, and would just hold us, for Mr. Small informs me *your* dimensions are much the same as usual.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Nov. 5, 1782.

Charissime Taurorum——

Quot sunt, vel fuerunt, vel posthac aliis erunt in annis.

We shall rejoice to see you, and I just write to tell you so. Whatever else I want, I have, at least, this quality in common with publicans and sinners, that I love those that love me, and, for that reason, you in particular. Your warm and affectionate manner demands it of me. And though I consider your love as growing out of a mistaken expectation that you shall see me a spiritual man hereafter, I do not love you much the less for it. I only regret that I did not know you intimately in those happier days, when the frame of my heart and mind was such as might have made a connexion with me not altogether unworthy of you.

I add only Mrs. Unwin's remembrances, and that I am glad you believe me to be, what I truly am,

Your faithful and affectionate,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 11, 1782.

Your shocking scrawl, as you term it, was, however, a very welcome one. The character, indeed, has not quite the neatness and beauty of an engraving; but, if it cost me some pains to decypher it, they were well rewarded by the minute information it conveyed. I am glad your health is such, that you have nothing more to complain of than may be expected on the down-hill side of life. If mine is better than yours, it is to be attributed, I suppose, principally, to the constant enjoyment of country air and retirement; the most

perfect regularity in matters of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and a happy emancipation from every thing that wears the face of business. I lead the life I always wished for, and, the single circumstance of dependence excepted, (which, between ourselves, is very contrary to my predominant humour and disposition,) have no want left broad enough for another wish to stand upon.

You may not, perhaps, live to see your trees attain to the dignity of timber—I, nevertheless, approve of your planting, and the disinterested spirit that prompts you to it. Few people plant, when they are young; a thousand other less profitable amusements divert their attention; and most people, when the date of youth is once expired, think it too late to begin. I can tell you, however, for your comfort and encouragement, that when a grove, which Major Cowper had planted, was of eighteen years' growth, it was no small ornament to his

grounds, and afforded as complete a shade as could be desired. Were I as old as your mother, in whose longevity I rejoice, and the more, because I consider it as, in some sort, a pledge and assurance of yours, and should come to the possession of land worth planting, I would begin to-morrow, and even without previously insisting upon a bond from Providence that I should live five years longer.

I saw last week a gentleman who was lately at Hastings. I asked him where he lodged. He replied at P——'s. I next enquired after the poor man's wife, whether alive or dead. He answered, dead. So then, said I, she has scolded her last; and a sensible old man will go down to his grave in peace. Mr. P——, to be sure, is of no great consequence, either to you, or to me; but having so fair an opportunity to inform myself about him, I could not neglect it. It gives me pleasure to learn somewhat of a man I knew a little of, so many years

since, and for that reason merely I mention the circumstance to you.

I find a single expression in your letter which needs correction. You say I carefully avoid paying you a visit at Wargrave. Not so;—but connected as I happily am, and rooted where I am, and not having travelled these twenty years—being, besides, of an indolent temper, and having spirits that cannot bear a bustle—all these are so many insuperables in the way. They are not, however, in yours; and if you and Mrs. Hill will make the experiment, you shall find yourselves as welcome here, both to me and to Mrs. Unwin, as it is possible you can be any where.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 1782.

I am to thank you for a fine cod, which came most opportunely to make a figure on our table, on an occasion that made him singularly welcome. I write, and you send me a fish. This is very well, but not altogether what I want. I wish to hear from you, because the fish, though he serves to convince me that you have me still in remembrance, says not a word of those that sent him, and with respect to your and Mrs. Hill's health, prosperity, and happiness, leaves me as much in the dark as before. You are aware, likewise, that where there is an exchange of letters, it is much easier to write. But I know the multiplicity of your affairs, and therefore perform my part of the correspondence as well

as I can, convinced that you would not omit yours, if you could help it.

Three days since I received a note from old Mr. Small, which was more than civil—it was warm and friendly. The good veteran excuses himself for not calling upon me, on account of the feeble state in which a fit of the gout had left him. He tells me, however, that he has seen Mrs. Hill, and your improvements at Wargrave, which will soon become an ornament to the place. May they! and may you both live long to enjoy them! I shall be sensibly mortified if the season and his gout together, should deprive me of the pleasure of receiving him here; for he is a man much to my taste, and quite an unique in this country.

When it suits you to send me some more of Elliott's medicines, I shall be obliged to you. My eyes are, in general, better than I remem-

ber them to have been, since I first opened them upon this sublunary stage, which is now a little more than half a century ago; yet I do not think myself safe, either without those remedies, or when, through long keeping, they have, in part, lost their virtue. I seldom use them without thinking of our trip to Maidenhead, where I first experienced their efficacy. We are growing old; but this is between ourselves: the world knows nothing of the matter. Mr. Small tells me you look much as you did; and as for me, being grown rather plump, the ladies tell me I am as young as ever.

Yours ever,

W. C.

## TO MRS. NEWTON.

MY DEAR MADAM, Nov. 23, 1782.

Accept my thanks for the trouble you take in vending my poems, and still more for the interest you take in their success. My authorship is undoubtedly pleased, when I hear that they are approved either by the great or the small; but to be approved by the great, as Horace observed many years ago, is fame indeed. Having met with encouragement, I consequently wish to write again; but wishes are a very small part of the qualifications necessary for such a purpose. Many a man who has succeeded tolerably well in his first attempt, has spoiled all by the second. But it just occurs to me that I told you so once before, and if my memory had served me with the intelligence a minute sooner, I would not have repeated the observation now.

The winter sets in with great severity. The rigour of the season, and the advanced price of grain, are very threatening to the poor. It is well with those that can feed upon a promise, and wrap themselves up warm in the robe of salvation. A good fire-side and a well-spread table are but very indifferent substitutes for these better accommodations; so very indifferent, that I would gladly exchange them both, for the rags and the unsatisfied hunger of the poorest creature that looks forward with hope to a better world, and weeps tears of joy in the midst of penury and distress. What a world is this! How mysteriously governed, and, in appearance, left to itself. One man, having squandered thousands at a gaming-table, finds it convenient to travel; gives his estate to somebody to manage for him; amuses himself a few years in France and Italy; returns, perhaps, wiser than he went, having acquired knowledge which, but for his follies, he would never have acquired; again makes a splendid

figure at home, shines in the senate, governs his country as its minister, is admired for his abilities, and, if successful, adored, at least by a party. When he dies he is praised as a demi-god, and his monument records every thing but his vices. The exact contrast of such a picture is to be found in many cottages at Olney. I have no need to describe them; you know the characters I mean. They love God, they trust him, they pray to him in secret, and though he means to reward them openly, the day of recompense is delayed. In the mean time they suffer every thing that infirmity and poverty can inflict upon them. Who would suspect, that has not a spiritual eye to discern it, that the fine gentleman was one whom his Maker had in abhorrence, and the wretch last-mentioned, dear to him as the apple of his eye? It is no wonder that the world, who are not in the secret, find themselves obliged, some of them, to doubt a Providence, and others, absolutely to deny it, when almost all the real virtue there is

in it, is to be found living and dying in a state of neglected obscurity, and all the vices of others cannot exclude them from the privilege of worship and honour! But behind the curtain the matter is explained; very little, however, to the satisfaction of the great.

If you ask me why I have written thus, and to you especially, to whom there was no need to write thus, I can only reply, that having a letter to write, and no news to communicate, I picked up the first subject I found, and pursued it as far as was convenient for my purpose.

Mr. Newton and I are of one mind on the subject of patriotism. Our dispute was no sooner begun than it ended. It would be well, perhaps, if, when two disputants begin to engage, their friends would hurry each into a separate chaise, and order them to opposite points of the compass. Let one travel twenty miles east; the other, as many west; then let

them write their opinions by the post. Much altercation and chafing of the spirit would be prevented; they would sooner come to a right understanding, and running away from each other, would carry on the combat more judiciously, in exact proportion to the distance.

My love to that gentleman, if you please; and tell him, that, like him, though I love my country, I hate its follies and its sins, and had rather see it scourged in mercy, than judicially hardened by prosperity.

Yours, my dear Madam, as ever,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 7, 1782.

At seven o'clock this evening, being the seventh of December, I imagine I see you in your box at the coffee-house. No doubt the

waiter, as ingenious and adroit as his predecessors were before him, raises the tea-pot to the ceiling with his right hand, while in his left the tea-cup descending almost to the floor, receives a limpid stream; limpid in its descent, but no sooner has it reached its destination, than frothing and foaming to the view, it becomes a roaring syllabub. This is the nineteenth winter since I saw you in this situation; and if nineteen more pass over me before I die, I shall still remember a circumstance we have often laughed at.

How different is the complexion of your evenings and mine!—yours, spent amid the ceaseless hum that proceeds from the inside of fifty noisy and busy periwigs; mine, by a domestic fire-side, in a retreat as silent as retirement can make it; where no noise is made but what we make for our own amusement. For instance, here are two rustics, and your humble servant in company. One of the ladies has

been playing on the harpsichord, while I, with the other, have been playing at battledore and shuttlecock. A little dog, in the mean time, howling under the chair of the former, performed, in the vocal way, to admiration. This entertainment over, I began my letter, and having nothing more important to communicate, have given you an account of it. I know you love dearly to be idle, when you can find an opportunity to be so; but as such opportunities are rare with you, I thought it possible that a short description of the idleness I enjoy might give you pleasure. The happiness we cannot call our own, we yet seem to possess, while we sympathise with our friends who can.

The papers tell me that peace is at hand, and that it is at a great distance; that the siege of Gibraltar is abandoned, and that it is to be still continued. It is happy for me, that though I love my country, I have but little

curiosity. There was a time when these contradictions would have distressed me, but I have learnt by experience that it is best for little people like myself to be patient, and to wait till time affords the intelligence which no speculations of theirs can ever furnish.

I thank you for a fine cod with oysters, and hope that ere long, I shall have to thank you for procuring me Elliott's medicines. Every time I feel the least uneasiness in either eye, I tremble lest, my Æsculapius being departed, my infallible remedy should be lost for ever. Adieu. My respects to Mrs. Hill.

Yours, faithfully,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 26, 1783.

It is reported among persons of the best intelligence at Olney—the barber, the schoolmaster, and the drummer of a corps quartered at this place, that the belligerent powers are at last reconciled, the articles of the treaty adjusted, and that peace is at the door. I saw this morning, at nine o'clock, a group of about twelve figures very closely engaged in a conference, as I suppose, upon the same subject. The scene of consultation was a blacksmith's shed, very comfortably screened from the wind, and directly opposed to the morning sun. Some held their hands behind them, some had them folded across their bosom, and others had thrust them into their breeches pockets. Every man's posture bespoke a pacific turn of mind; but the distance being too great for their words to reach me, nothing transpired. I am willing,

however, to hope that the secret will not be a secret long, and that you and I, equally interested in the event, though not, perhaps, equally well-informed, shall soon have an opportunity to rejoice in the completion of it. The powers of Europe have clashed with each other to a fine purpose; that the Americans, at length declared independent, may keep themselves so, if they can; and that what the parties, who have thought proper to dispute upon that point, have wrested from each other, in the course of the conflict, may be, in the issue of it, restored to the proper owner. Nations may be guilty of a conduct that would render an individual infamous for ever; and yet carry their heads high, talk of their glory, and despise their neighbours. Your opinions and mine, I mean our political ones, are not exactly of a piece, yet I cannot think otherwise upon this subject than I have always done. England, more, perhaps, through the fault of her generals, than her councils, has in some

instances acted with a spirit of cruel animosity she was never chargeable with till now. But this is the worst that can be said. On the other hand, the Americans, who, if they had contented themselves with a struggle for lawful liberty, would have deserved applause, seem to me to have incurred the guilt of parricide, by renouncing their parent, by making her ruin their favourite object, and by associating themselves with her worst enemy, for the accomplishment of their purpose. France, and of course, Spain, have acted a treacherous, a thievish part. They have stolen America from England, and whether they are able to possess themselves of that jewel or not hereafter, it was doubtless what they intended. Holland appears to me in a meaner light than any of them. They quarrelled with a friend for an enemy's sake. The French led them by the nose, and the English have thrashed them for suffering it. My views of the contest being, and having been always, such, I have conse-

quently brighter hopes for England than her situation sometime since seemed to justify. She is the only injured party. America may, perhaps, call her the aggressor; but if she were so, America has not only repelled the injury, but done a greater. As to the rest, if perfidy, treachery, avarice, and ambition, can prove their cause to have been a rotten one, those proofs are found upon them. I think, therefore, that whatever scourge may be prepared for England, on some future day, her ruin is not yet to be expected.

Acknowledge, now, that I am worthy of a place under the shed I described, and that I should make no small figure among the *quidnuncs* of Olney.

I wish the society you have formed may prosper. Your subjects will be of greater importance, and discussed with more sufficiency. The earth is a grain of sand, but the spiritual

interests of man are commensurate with the heavens.*

Pray remind Mr. Bull, who has too much genius to have a good memory, that he has an account to settle for Mrs. Unwin with her grocer, and give our love to him. Accept for yourself and Mrs. Newton your just share of the same commodity, with our united thanks for a very fine barrel of oysters. This, indeed, is rather commending the barrel than its contents. I should say, therefore, for a barrel of very fine oysters.

Yours, my dear friend, as ever,

W. C.

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* Mr. Hayley has transferred the last sentence of this paragraph to a letter to the same correspondent, dated Feb. 8, 1783. There it was, of course, *his* reflection; here it is *Cowper's*; which must be the editor's apology for the duplicate.

## TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Feb. 2, 1783.

I give you joy of the restoration of that sincere and firm friendship between the Kings of England and France, that has been so long interrupted. It is a great pity, when hearts so cordially united are divided by trifles. Thirteen pitiful colonies, which the King of England chose to keep, and the King of France to obtain, if he could, have disturbed that harmony which would else, no doubt, have subsisted between those illustrious personages to this moment. If the King of France, whose greatness of mind is only equalled by that of his Queen, had regarded them, unworthy of his notice as they were, with an eye of suitable indifference; or, had he thought it a matter deserving in any degree his princely attention, that they were, in reality, the pro-

perty of his good friend the King of England; or, had the latter been less obstinately determined to hold fast his interest in them; and could he, with that civility and politeness in which monarchs are expected to excel, have entreated his Majesty of France to accept a bagatelle, for which he seemed to have conceived so strong a predilection, all this mischief had been prevented. But monarchs, alas! crowned, and sceptred, as they are, are yet but men; they fall out, and are reconciled, just like the meanest of their subjects. I cannot, however, sufficiently admire the moderation and magnanimity of the King of England. His dear friend on the other side of the channel, has not indeed taken actual possession of the colonies in question, but he has effectually wrested them out of the hands of their original owner, who, nevertheless, letting fall the extinguisher of patience upon the flame of his resentment, and glowing with no other flame than that of the sin-

cerest affection, embraces the King of France again, gives him Senegal and Goree in Africa, gives him the islands he had taken from him in the West, gives him his conquered territories in the East, gives him a fishery upon the banks of Newfoundland; and, as if all this were too little, merely because he knows that Louis has a partiality for the King of Spain, gives to the latter an island in the Mediterranean, which thousands of English had purchased with their lives; and, in America, all that he wanted, at least all that he could ask. No doubt there will be great cordiality between this royal trio for the future: and though wars may perhaps be kindled between their posterity, some ages hence, the present generation shall never be witnesses of such a calamity again. I expect soon to hear that the Queen of France, who, just before this rupture happened, made the Queen of England a present of a watch, has, in acknowledgment of all these acts of kindness,

sent her also a seal wherewith to ratify the treaty. Surely she can do no less.

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 8, 1783.

When I consider the peace as the work of our ministers, and reflect that with more wisdom, or more spirit, they might, perhaps, have procured a better, I confess it does not please me. Such another peace would ruin us, I suppose, as effectually as a war protracted to the extremest inch of our ability to bear it. I do not think it just that the French should plunder us, and be paid for doing it; nor does it appear to me that there was absolute necessity for such tameness on our part, as we discover in the present treaty. We give away all that is demanded, and receive nothing but

what was our own before. So far as this stain upon our national honour, and this diminution of our national property, are a judgment upon our iniquities, I submit, and have no doubt but that ultimately it will be found to be judgment mixed with mercy.—But so far as I see it to be the effect of French knavery and British despondency, I feel it as a disgrace, and grumble at it as a wrong. I dislike it the more, because the peacemaker has been so immoderately praised for his performance, which is, in my opinion, a contemptible one enough. Had he made the French smart for their baseness, I would have praised him too;—a minister should have shown his wisdom by securing some points, at least, for the benefit of his country. A schoolboy might have made concessions. After all, perhaps, the worst consequence of this awkward business will be dissension in the two Houses, and dissatisfaction throughout the kingdom. They that love their country, will be grieved to see her trampled upon; and

they that love mischief will have a fair opportunity of making it. Were I a member of the Commons, even with the same religious sentiments as impress me now, I should think it my duty to condemn it.

You will suppose me a politician; but in truth I am nothing less. These are the thoughts that occur to me while I read the newspaper; and when I have laid it down, I feel myself more interested in the success of my early cucumbers, than in any part of this great and important subject. If I see them droop a little, I forget that we have been many years at war; that we have made an humiliating peace; that we are deeply in debt, and unable to pay. All these reflections are absorbed at once in the anxiety I feel for a plant, the fruit of which I cannot eat, when I have procured it. How wise, how consistent, how respectable a creature is man!

Because we have nobody to preach the gospel at Olney, Mr. —— waits only for a barn, at present occupied by a strolling company; and the moment they quit it, he begins. He is disposed to think the dissatisfied of all denominations may possibly be united under his standard; and that the great work of forming a more extensive and more established interest than any of them, is reserved for him.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her kind letter, and for executing her commissions. We truly love you both, think of you often, and one of us prays for you;—the other will, when he can pray for himself.*

W. C.

* The former part of this concluding paragraph was published by Mr. Hayley; but for the sake of the striking sentence which he omitted, the editor ventures to repeat it here.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 13, 1783.

I am so perfectly at leisure, that I am less excusable for not writing frequently to you, than you for not writing at all to me. It is not very probable, that in the hurry of so much business, you should form a wish to know in what manner I spend my time; and yet if that information should come, though uninvited by a wish, it may not be altogether unacceptable.

My time passes partly in finding fault with a peace, which, deplorable as our condition is, I suppose nobody approves; and partly in quarrelling with a rainy season, and a most dirty country. I raise cucumbers which I cannot eat, merely because it is difficult to raise them; and the conquest of difficulties

is one of the most agreeable things in the world, because it is one of the most flattering to our pride. When I can, I walk, but always with a lady under my arm, which again is amusing, and for the same reason; for to extricate the ladies out of all the bogs into which I lead them, is no small proof of ingenuity and prowess. Thus I spend my mornings; and my evenings in winding their silk and cotton, or reading history to the aforesaid ladies. Sigh, now, and say—Happy creature! how I envy you. Envy me you must.

[Torn off.]

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 24, 1783.

A weakness in one of my eyes may possibly shorten my letter, but I mean to

make it as long as my present materials, and my ability to write, can suffice for.

I am almost sorry to say that I am reconciled to the peace, being reconciled to it not upon principles of approbation, but necessity. The deplorable condition of the country, insisted on by the friends of administration, and not denied by their adversaries, convinces me that our only refuge under Heaven was in the treaty with which I quarrelled. The treaty itself I find less objectionable than I did, Lord Shelburne having given a colour to some of the articles that makes them less painful in the contemplation. But my opinion upon the whole affair is, that now is the time (if indeed there is salvation for the country) for Providence to interpose to save it. A peace with the greatest political advantages would not have healed us; a peace with none may procrastinate our ruin for a season, but cannot ultimately prevent it. The prospect

may make all tremble who have no trust in God, and even they that trust may tremble. The peace will probably be of short duration; and, in the ordinary course of things, another war must end us. A great country in ruins will not be beheld with eyes of indifference, even by those who have a better country to look to. But with them all will be well at last.

As to the Americans, perhaps I do not forgive them as I ought; perhaps I shall always think of them with some resentment as the destroyers, intentionally the destroyers, of this country. They have pushed that point farther than the house of Bourbon could have carried it in half a century. I may be prejudiced against them, but I do not think them equal to the task of establishing an empire. Great men are necessary for such a purpose; and their great men, I believe, are yet unborn. They have had passion and obstinacy

enough to do us much mischief; but whether the event will be salutary to themselves or not, must wait for proof. I agree with you, that it is possible America may become a land of extraordinary evangelical light; but, at the same time, I cannot discover any thing in their new situation peculiarly favourable to such a supposition. They cannot have more liberty of conscience than they had; at least, if that liberty was under any restraint, it was a restraint of their own making. Perhaps a new settlement in church and state may leave them less.—Well—all will be over soon. The time is at hand when an empire will be established that shall fill the earth. Neither statesmen nor generals will lay the foundation of it, but it shall rise at the sound of the trumpet.

I am well in body, but with a mind that would wear out a frame of adamant; yet upon *my* frame, which is not very robust, its effects

are not discernible. Mrs. Unwin is in health. Accept our unalienable love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1783.

When will you come and tell us what you think of the peace? Is it a good peace in itself, or a good peace only in reference to the ruinous condition of our country? I quarrelled most bitterly with it at first, finding nothing in the terms of it but disgrace and destruction to Great Britain. But having learned since, that we are already destroyed and disgraced, as much as we can be, I like it better, and think myself deeply indebted to the King of France for treating us with so much lenity. The olive-branch, indeed, has neither leaf nor fruit, but it

is still an olive-branch. Mr. Newton and I have exchanged several letters on the subject; sometimes considering, like grave politicians as we are, the state of Europe at large; sometimes the state of England in particular; sometimes the conduct of the house of Bourbon; sometimes that of the Dutch; but most especially that of the Americans. We have not differed perhaps very widely, nor even so widely as we seemed to do; but still we have differed. We have, however, managed our dispute with temper, and brought it to a peaceable conclusion. So far, at least, we have given proof of a wisdom which abler politicians than myself would do well to imitate.

How do you like your northern mountaineers? Can a man be a good Christian that goes without breeches? You are better qualified to solve me this question than any man I know, having, as I am informed, preached to many of them, and conversed, no doubt,

with some. You must know, I love a Highlander, and think I can see in them what Englishmen once were, but never will be again. Such have been the effects of luxury!

You know that I kept two hares. I have written nothing since I saw you but an epitaph on one of them, which died last week. I send you the *first* impression of it.

Here lies, &c.*

Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,
W. C.

* Vide Cowper's Poems.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1783.

Were my letters composed of materials worthy of your acceptance, they should be longer. There is a subject upon which they who know themselves interested in it are never weary of writing. That subject is not within my reach; and there are few others that do not soon fatigue me. Upon these, however, I might possibly be more diffuse, could I forget that I am writing to *you*, to whom I think it just as improper and absurd to send a sheet full of trifles, as it would be to allow myself that liberty, were I writing to one of the four evangelists. But since you measure *me* with so much exactness, give me leave to requite you in your own way. *Your* manuscript, indeed, is close, and I do not reckon *mine* very lax. You make no margin, it is true; if you did, you would have need of their Lilliputian

art, who can enclose the creed within the circle of a shilling; for, upon the nicest comparison, I find your paper an inch smaller every way than mine. Were my writing, therefore, as compact as yours, my letters *with* a margin would be as long as yours without one. Let this consideration, added to that of their futility, prevail with you to think them, if not long, yet long enough.

Yesterday, a body of Highlanders passed through Olney. They are part of that regiment which lately mutinied at Portsmouth. Convinced to a man, that General —— had sold them to the East India Company, they breathe nothing but vengeance, and swear they will pull down his house in Scotland, as soon as they arrive there. The rest of them are quartered at Dunstable, Woburn, and Newport; in all eleven hundred. A party of them, it is said, are to continue some days at Olney. None of their principal officers are with them;

either conscious of guilt, or, at least, knowing themselves to be suspected as privy to, and partners in, the iniquitous bargain, they fear the resentment of the corps. The design of government seems to be to break them into small divisions, that they may find themselves, when they reach Scotland, too weak to do much mischief. Forty of them attended Mr. Bull, who found himself singularly happy in an opportunity to address himself to a flock bred upon the Caledonian mountains. He told them he would walk to John O'Groat's house to hear a soldier pray. They are in general so far religious that they will hear none but evangelical preaching; and many of them are said to be truly so. Nevertheless, General ——'s skull was in some danger among them; for he was twice felled to the ground with the butt-end of a musquet. The sergeant-major rescued him, or he would have been for ever rendered incapable of selling Highlanders to the India Company. I am obliged to you for your extract from Mr. Bowman's letter. I feel myself

sensibly pleased by the approbation of men of taste and learning; but that my vanity may not get too much to windward, my spirits are kept under by a total inability to renew my enterprises in the poetical way.

We love and respect Mrs. Cunningham, and sympathize with her under her many trials. May she arrive in safety! The severity of the season will, I suppose, retard her journey. We should rejoice more in your joy on the occasion, did not her visit to London look with an unfavourable aspect upon yours to Olney.

We are tolerably well, and love you both.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

When your last letter came, my eye was so much inflamed, that I could not look at your seal. It is better now, and I mean to consider it well when I see it next.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 20, 1783.

My device was intended to represent not my own heart, but the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses. I have the thorn without the rose. My briar is a wintry one, the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains. My days are spent in vanity, and it is impossible for me to spend them otherwise. No man upon earth is more sensible of the unprofitableness of a life like mine, than I am, or groans more heavily under the burthen; but this too is vanity, because it is in vain; my groans will not bring the remedy, because there is no remedy for me. The time when I seem to be most rationally employed, is when I am reading. My studies, however, are very much confined, and of little use, because I have no books but what I borrow, and nobody will lend

me a memory. My own is almost worn out. I read the Biographia and the Review. If all the readers of the former had memories like mine, the compilers of that work would in vain have laboured to rescue the great names of past ages from oblivion, for what I read to-day, I forget to-morrow. A by-stander might say, This is rather an advantage, the book is always new;—but I beg the by-stander's pardon; I can recollect though I cannot remember, and with the book in my hand I recognise those passages which, without the book, I should never have thought of more. The Review pleases me most, because, if the contents escape me, I regret them less, being a very supercilious reader of most modern writers. Either I dislike the subject, or the manner of treating it; the stile is affected, or the matter is disgusting. * *

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I see ——— (though he was a learned man, and sometimes wrote like a wise one,) labouring under invincible prejudices against the

truth and its professors; heterodox in his opinion upon some religious subjects, and reasoning most weakly in support of them. How has he toiled to prove that the perdition of the wicked is not eternal, that there may be repentance in hell, and that the devils may be saved at last: thus establishing, as far as in him lies, the belief of a purgatory, and approaching nearer to the church of Rome than ever any Methodist did, though papalizing is the crime with which he charges all of that denomination. When I think of him, I think too of some who shall say hereafter, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wondrous works? Then shall he say unto them, Depart from me, for I never knew you." But perhaps he might be enlightened in his last moments, and saved in the very article of dissolution. It is much to be wished, and indeed hoped, that he was. Such a man reprobated in the great day, would be the most melancholy spectacle of all that shall stand at the left hand

hereafter. But I do not think that *many*, or indeed *any* will be found there, who in their lives were sober, virtuous, and sincere, truly pious in the use of their little light, and though ignorant of God, in comparison with some others, yet sufficiently informed to know that He is to be feared, loved, and trusted. An operation is often performed within the curtains of a dying bed, in behalf of such men, that the nurse and the doctor (I mean the doctor and the nurse) have no suspicion of. The soul makes but one step out of darkness into light, and makes that step without a witness. My brother's case has made me very charitable in my opinion about the future state of such men.

We wait with anxiety to be informed what news you receive from Scotland. Present our love, if you please, to Miss Cunningham. I saw in the Gentleman's Magazine for last month, an account of a physician who has

discovered a new method of treating consumptive cases, which has succeeded wonderfully in the trial. He finds the seat of the distemper in the stomach, and cures it principally by emetics. The old method of encountering the disorder has proved so unequal to the task, that I should be much inclined to any new practice that came well recommended. He is spoken of as a sensible and judicious man, but his name I have forgot.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 12, 1783.

They that have found a God, and are permitted to worship him, have found a treasure, of which, highly as they may prize it, they have but very scanty and limited con-

ceptions. Take my word for it,—the word of a man singularly well qualified to give his evidence in this matter, who having enjoyed the privilege some years, has been deprived of it more, and has no hope that he shall live to recover it. These are my Sunday morning speculations,—the sound of the bells suggested them, or rather, gave them such an emphasis that they forced their way into my pen, in spite of me; for though I do not often commit them to paper, they are never absent from my mind.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 3, 1783.

My green-house, fronted with myrtles, and where I hear nothing but the pattering of a fine shower and the sound of distant thunder,

wants only the fumes of your pipe to make it perfectly delightful. Tobacco was not known in the golden age. So much the worse for the golden age. This age of iron or lead, would be insupportable without it; and therefore we may reasonably suppose that the happiness of those better days would have been much improved by the use of it. We hope that you and your son are perfectly recovered. The season has been most unfavourable to animal life; and I, who am merely animal, have suffered much by it.

Though I should be glad to write, I write little or nothing. The time for such fruit is not yet come; but I expect it, and I wish for it. I want amusement; and, deprived of that, have none to supply the place of it. I send you, however, according to my promise to send you every thing, two stanzas composed at the request of Lady Austen. She wanted words

to a tune she much admired, and I gave her the following,

ON PEACE.

No longer I follow a sound, &c.*

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 8, 1783.

I have been lately more dejected and more distressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse, after eleven years of misery; but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. You know

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* Vide Poems, vol. III. p. 98.

not what I suffered while you were here, nor was there any need you should. Your friendship for me would have made you in some degree a partaker of my woes; and your share in them would have been increased by your inability to help me. Perhaps, indeed, they took a keener edge from the consideration of your presence. The friend of my heart, the person with whom I had formerly taken sweet counsel, no longer useful to me as a minister, no longer pleasant to me as a Christian, was a spectacle that must necessarily add the bitterness of mortification to the sadness of despair. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can. I know the ground, before I tread upon it. It is hollow; it is agitated; it suffers shocks in every direction; it is like the soil of Calabria—all whirlpool and undulation. But I must reel through it; at least, if I be not swallowed up by the way.

Yours,

W. C.

## TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 20, 1783.

I have nothing to say on political subjects, for two reasons; first, because I know none that at present would prove very amusing, especially to you who love your country; and, secondly, because there are none that I have the vanity to think myself qualified to discuss. I must beg leave, however, to rejoice a little at the failure of the Caisse d'Escomptes, because I think the French have well deserved it; and to mourn equally that the Royal George cannot be weighed; the rather, because I wrote two poems, one Latin and one English, to encourage the attempt. The former of these only having been published, which the sailors would understand but little of, may be the reason, perhaps, why

they have not succeeded. Believe me, my friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 22, 1783.

I have made a point of saying no fine things to Mr. Bacon, upon an occasion that would well have justified them; deterred by a *Caveat* he entered in his letter. Nothing can be more handsome than the present, nor more obliging than the manner in which he has made it. I take it for granted that the plate is, line for line, and stroke for stroke, an exact representation of his performance, as nearly at least, as light and shade can exhibit, upon a flat surface, the effect of a piece of statuary. I may be allowed there-

fore to say that I admire it. My situation affords me no opportunity to cultivate the science of connoisseurship; neither would there be much propriety in my speaking the language of one to you, who disclaim the character. But we both know when we are pleased.—It occurs to me, however, that I ought to say what it is that pleases me, for a general commendation, where there are so many particular beauties, would be insipid and unjust.

I think the figure of Lord Chatham singularly graceful, and his countenance full of the character that belongs to him. It speaks not only great ability and consummate skill, but a tender and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the charge committed to him. In the figure of the City, there is all that *empressement* (pardon a French term, it expresses my idea better than any English one that occurs,) that the importance of her

errand calls for; and it is noble in its air, though in a posture of supplication. But the figure of Commerce is indeed a perfect beauty. It is a literal truth, that I felt the tears flush into my eyes while I looked at her. The idea of so much elegance and grace having found so powerful a protection, was irresistible. There is a complacency and serenity in the air and countenance of Britannia, more suited to her dignity than that exultation and triumph which a less judicious hand might have dressed her in. She seems happy to sit at the feet of her deliverer.—I have most of the monuments in the Abbey by heart, but I recollect none that ever gave me so much pleasure. The faces are all expressive, and the figures are all graceful.—If you think the opinion of so unlearned a spectator worth communicating, and that I have not said more than Mr. Bacon's modesty can bear without offence, you are welcome to make him privy to my sentiments.

I know not why he should be hurt by just praise; his fine talent is a gift, and all the merit of it is His property who gave it.

Believe me, my dear friend,

sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. C.

I am out of your debt.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 3, 1783.

My time is short, and my opportunity not the most favourable. My letter will consequently be short likewise, and perhaps not very intelligible. I find it no very easy matter to bring my mind into that degree of composure, which is necessary to the arrangement either of words or matter. You will naturally expect to receive some account of this confusion that I describe, some reason given for it.—

On Saturday night at eleven o'clock, when I had not been in bed five minutes, I was alarmed by a cry of fire, announced by two or three shrill screams upon our staircase. Our servants, who were going to bed, saw it from their windows, and in appearance so near, that they thought our house in danger. I immediately rose, and putting by the curtain, saw sheets of fire rising above the ridge of Mr. Palmer's house, opposite to ours. The deception was such, that I had no doubt it had begun with *him*, but soon found that it was rather farther off. In fact, it was at three places;—in the out-houses belonging to George Griggs, Lucy and Abigail Tyrrel. Having broke out in three different parts, it is supposed to have been maliciously kindled. A tar-barrel and a quantity of tallow made a most tremendous blaze, and the buildings it had seized upon being all thatched, the appearance became every moment more formidable. Providentially, the night was perfectly calm, so calm that candles

without lanterns, of which there were multitudes in the street, burnt as steadily as in a house. By four in the morning it was so far reduced, that all danger seemed to be over; but the confusion it had occasioned was almost infinite. Every man who supposed his dwelling-house in jeopardy, emptied it as fast as he could, and conveyed his moveables to the house of some neighbour, supposed to be more secure. Ours, in the space of two hours, was so filled with all sorts of lumber, that we had not even room for a chair by the fireside. George Griggs is the principal sufferer. He gave eighteen guineas, or nearly that sum, to a woman whom, in his hurry, he mistook for his wife, but the supposed wife walked off with the money, and he will probably never recover it. He has likewise lost forty pounds' worth of wool. London never exhibited a scene of greater depredation, drunkenness, and riot. Every thing was stolen that could be got at, and every drop of liquor drunk

that was not guarded. Only one thief has yet been detected; a woman of the name of J——, who was stopped by young Handscomb with an apron full of plunder. He was forced to strike her down, before he could wrest it from her. Could you visit the place, you would see a most striking proof of a Providence interposing to stop the progress of the flames. They had almost reached, that is to say, within six yards of Daniel Raban's wood-pile, in which were fifty pounds' worth of faggots and furze; and exactly there they were extinguished: otherwise, especially if a breath of air had happened to move, all that side of the town must probably have been consumed. After all this dreadful conflagration, we find nothing burnt but the out-houses; and the dwellings to which they belonged have suffered only the damage of being unroofed on that side next the fire. No lives were lost, nor any limbs broken. Mrs. Unwin, whose spirits served her while the hubbub lasted, and the day after, begins to

feel the effect of it now. But I hope she will be relieved from it soon, being better this evening than I expected. As for me, I am impregnable to all such assaults. I have nothing, however, but this subject in my mind, and it is in vain that I invite any other into it. Having, therefore, exhausted this, I finish, assuring you of our united love, and hoping to find myself in a frame of mind more suited to my employment when I write next.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 17, 1783.

The country around us is much alarmed with apprehensions of fire. Two have happened, since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to eleven thou-

sand pounds, and another, at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not learnt the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford, threatening to burn the town; and the inhabitants have been so intimidated, as to have placed a guard in many parts of it, several nights past. Since our conflagration here, we have sent two women and a boy to the justice, for depredation; S—— R——, for stealing a piece of beef, which, in her excuse, she said she intended to take care of. This lady, whom you well remember, escaped for want of evidence; not that evidence was indeed wanting, but our men of Gotham judged it unnecessary to send it. With her went the woman I mentioned before, who, it seems, has made some sort of profession, but upon this occasion allowed herself a latitude of conduct rather inconsistent with it, having filled her apron with wearing apparel, which she likewise intended to take care of. She would have gone to the county gaol, had William Raban, the baker's son, who

prosecuted, insisted upon it; but he goodnaturedly, though I think weakly, interposed in her favour, and begged her off. The young gentleman who accompanied these fair ones, is the junior son of Molly Boswell. He had stolen some iron-work, the property of Griggs, the butcher. Being convicted, he was ordered to be whipt, which operation he underwent at the cart's tail, from the stone-house to the high arch, and back again. He seemed to shew great fortitude, but it was all an imposition upon the public. The beadle, who performed it, had filled his left hand with red ochre, through which, after every stroke, he drew the lash of his whip, leaving the appearance of a wound upon the skin, but in reality not hurting him at all. This being perceived by Mr. Constable H——, who followed the beadle, he applied his cane, without any such management or precaution, to the shoulders of the too merciful executioner. The scene immediately became more interesting. The beadle could by

no means be prevailed upon to strike hard, which provoked the constable to strike harder; and this double flogging continued, till a lass of Silver-end, pitying the pitiful beadle thus suffering under the hands of the pitiless constable, joined the procession, and placing herself immediately behind the latter, seized him by his capillary club, and pulling him backwards by the same, slapt his face with a most Amazonian fury. This concatenation of events has taken up more of my paper than I intended it should, but I could not forbear to inform you how the beadle threshed the thief, the constable the beadle, and the lady the constable, and how the thief was the only person concerned who suffered nothing. Mr. Teedon has been here, and is gone again. He came to thank me for some left-off clothes. In answer to our enquiries after his health, he replied that he had a slow fever, which made him take all possible care not to inflame his blood. I admitted his prudence, but in his particular instance, could not

very clearly discern the need of it. Pump water will not heat him much; and, to speak a little in his own style, more inebriating fluids are to him, I fancy, not very attainable. He brought us news, the truth of which, however, I do not vouch for, that the town of Bedford was actually on fire yesterday, and the flames not extinguished when the bearer of the tidings left it.

Swift observes, when he is giving his reasons why the preacher is elevated always above his hearers, that let the crowd be as great as it will below, there is always room enough over-head. If the French philosophers can carry their art of flying to the perfection they desire, the observation may be reversed, the crowd will be over-head, and they will have most room, who stay below. I can assure you, however, upon my own experience, that this way of travelling is very delightful. I dreamt a night or two since, that I drove myself through

the upper regions in a balloon and pair, with the greatest ease and security. Having finished the tour I intended, I made a short turn, and, with one flourish of my whip, descended; my horses prancing and curvetting with an infinite share of spirit, but without the least danger, either to me or my vehicle. The time, we may suppose, is at hand, and seems to be prognosticated by my dream, when these airy excursions will be universal, when judges will fly the circuit, and bishops their visitations; and when the tour of Europe will be performed with much greater speed, and with equal advantage, by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say, that they have made it.

I beg you will accept for yourself and yours our unfeigned love, and remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon, when you see him.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 23, 1783.

Your opinion of voyages and travels would spoil an appetite less keen than mine; but being pretty much, perhaps more than any man who can be said to enjoy his liberty, confined to a spot, and being very desirous of knowing all that can be known of this same planet of ours, while I have the honour to belong to it,—and having, besides, no other means of information at my command, I am constrained to be satisfied with narratives, not always, indeed, to be implicitly depended upon, but which, being subjected to the exercise of a little consideration, cannot materially deceive us. Swinburn's is a book I had fixed upon, and determined, if possible, to procure, being pleased with some extracts from it, which I found in the Review. I need hardly add that I shall be much obliged to Mrs. Hill for a sight of it.

I account myself truly and much indebted to that lady for the trouble she is so kind as to take upon my account, and shall esteem myself her debtor for all the amusement I meet with, in the southern hemisphere, should I be so fortunate as to get there. My reading is pretty much circumscribed, both by want of books and the influence of particular reasons. Politics are my abhorrence, being almost always hypothetical, fluctuating, and impracticable. Philosophy — I should have said natural philosophy, mathematically studied, does not suit me; and such exhibitions of that subject, as are calculated for less learned readers, I have read in former days, and remember in the present. Poetry, English poetry, I never touch, being pretty much addicted to the writing of it, and knowing that much intercourse with those gentlemen betrays us unavoidably into a habit of imitation, which I hate and despise most cordially.

I am glad my uncle is so well, and that he found new beauties in so old an acquaintance as the scene at Hastings. My most affectionate respects to him, if you please, when you see him next.—If *he* be the happiest man, who has least money in the funds, there are few upon earth whom I have any occasion to envy. I would consent, however, to have my pounds multiplied into thousands, even at the hazard of all I might feel from that tormenting passion. I send nothing to the papers myself, but Unwin sometimes sends for me. His receptacle of my squibs is the Public Advertiser; but they are very few, and my present occupations are of a kind that will still have a tendency to make them fewer.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 30, 1783.

I have neither long visits to pay nor to receive, nor ladies to spend hours in telling me that which might be told in five minutes, yet often find myself obliged to be an economist of time, and to make the most of a short opportunity. Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them, in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us, under that imposing character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have

made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the Antediluvian world; that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goats-milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of

about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stript off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chace, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough, I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the mean time the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus what with tilling the ground, and eating the fruit of it, hunting and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied, as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find at the end of many centuries, that they had all

slipt through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow. What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this? Thus, however, it is, and if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so.

This by way of introduction; now for my letter. Mr. Scott is desired by Mr. De Coetlegon to contribute to the Theological Review, of which, I suppose, that gentleman is a manager. He says he has insured your assistance, and at the same time desires mine, either in

prose or verse. He did well to apply to you, because you can afford him substantial help; but as for me, had he known me better, he would never have suspected me for a theologian, either in rhyme or otherwise.

Lord Dartmouth's Mr. Wright spent near two hours with me this morning; a respectable old man, whom I always see with pleasure, both for his master's sake and for his own. I was glad to learn from him that his lordship has better health than he has enjoyed for some years.

Believe me, my dear friend,

your affectionate

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 15, 1783.

I know not how it fares with you, at a time when philosophy has just brought forth her most extraordinary production, not excepting, perhaps, that prodigy, a ship, in all respects complete, and equal to the task of circumnavigating the globe. My mind, however, is frequently getting into these balloons, and is busy in multiplying speculations as airy as the regions through which they pass. The last account from France, which seems so well authenticated, has changed my jocularity upon this occasion into serious expectation. The invention of these new vehicles is yet in its infancy, yet already they seem to have attained a degree of perfection which navigation did not reach, till ages of experience had matured it, and science had exhausted both her industry

and her skill, in its improvement. I am aware, indeed, that the first boat or canoe that was ever formed, though rude in its construction—perhaps not constructed at all, being only a hollow tree that had fallen casually into the water, and which, though furnished with neither sails nor oars, might yet be guided by a pole—was a more perfect creature in its kind than a balloon at present; the single circumstance of its manageable nature giving it a clear superiority both in respect of safety and convenience. But the atmosphere, though a much thinner medium, we well know, resists the impression made upon it by the tail of a bird, as effectually as the water that of a ship's rudder. Pope, when inculcating one of his few useful lessons, and directing mankind to the providence of God, as the true source of all their wisdom, says beautifully—

Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

It is easy to parody these lines, so as to give them an accommodation and suitableness to the present purpose.

> Learn of the circle-making kite to fly,
> Spread the fan-tail, and wheel about the sky.

It is certain, at least, that nothing within the reach of human ingenuity will be left unattempted to accomplish, and add all that is wanting to this last effort of philosophical contrivance. The approximating powers of the telescope, and the powers by which the thunder-storm is delivered of its contents peaceably and without mischief, were once, perhaps, in appearance more remote from discovery, and seemed less practicable, than we may now suppose it, to give direction to that which is already buoyant; especially possessed as we are of such consummate mechanical skill, already masters of principles which we have nothing to do but to apply, of which we have already

availed ourselves in the similar case of navigation, and having in every fowl of the air a pattern, which now at length it may be sufficient to imitate. Wings and a tail, indeed, were of little use, while the body, so much heavier than the space of air it occupied, was sure to sink by its own weight, and could never be held in equipoise by any implements of the kind which human strength could manage. But now we float; at random, indeed, pretty much, and as the wind drives us; for want of nothing, however, but that steerage which invention, the conqueror of many equal, if not superior difficulties, may be expected to supply.—Should the point be carried, and man at last become as familiar with the air as he has long been with the ocean, will it in its consequences prove a mercy, or a judgment? I think, a judgment. First, because if a power to convey himself from place to place, like a bird, would have been good for him, his Maker would have formed him with such a capacity. But he

has been a groveller upon the earth for six thousand years, and now at last, when the close of this present state of things approaches, begins to exalt himself above it. So much the worse for *him*. Like a truant school-boy, he breaks his bounds, and will have reason to repent of his presumption.—Secondly, I think it will prove a judgment, because, with the exercise of very little foresight, it is easy to prognosticate a thousand evils which the project must necessarily bring after it; amounting at last to the confusion of all order, the annihilation of all authority, with dangers both to property and person, and impunity to the offenders. Were I an absolute legislator, I would therefore make it death for a man to be convicted of flying, the moment he could be caught; and to bring him down from his altitudes by a bullet sent through his head or his carriage, should be no murder. Philosophers would call me a Vandal; the scholar would say that, had it not been for me, the fable of Dæda-

lus would have been realised; and historians would load my memory with reproaches of phlegm, and stupidity, and oppression; but in the mean time the world would go on quietly, and, if it enjoyed less liberty, would at least be more secure.

I know not what are your sentiments upon the subject of the East India Bill. This, too, has frequently afforded me matter of speculation. I can easily see that it is not without its blemishes; but its beauties, in my eye, are much predominant. Whatever may be its author's views, if he delivers so large a portion of mankind from such horrible tyranny as the East has so long suffered, he deserves a statue much more than Mongolfier, who, it seems, is to receive that honour. Perhaps he may bring our own freedom into jeopardy; but to do this for the sake of emancipating nations so much more numerous than ourselves, is at least generous, and a design that should have my

encouragement, if I had any encouragement to afford it.

We are well, and love you. Remember us, as I doubt not you do, with the same affection, and be content with my sentiments upon subjects such as these, till I can send you, if that day should ever come, a letter more worthy of your reception.

Nous sommes les vôtres,

Guillaume et Marie.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 27, 1783.

Thanks to the patriotic junto, whose efforts have staved off the expected dissolution, franks have not yet lost their currency. Ignorant as they were that my writing by this post depended upon the existence of the present parliament, they have conducted their delibera-

tions with a sturdiness and magnanimity that would almost tempt one to suppose that they had known it. So true it is, that the actions of men are connected with consequences they are little aware of; and that events, comparatively trivial in themselves, may give birth to the most important.

My thoughts of ministers and men in power are nearly akin to yours. It is well for the public, when the rulers of a state are actuated by principles that may happen to coincide with its interests. The ambition of an individual has often been made subservient to the general good; and many a man has served his country, merely for the sake of immortalizing himself by doing it. So far, it seems to me, the natural man is to be trusted, and no farther. Self is at the bottom of all his conduct. If self can be pleased, flattered, enriched, exalted by his exertions, and his talents are such as qualify him for great usefulness, his country shall be

the better for him. And this, perhaps, is all the patriotism we have a right to look for. In the mean time, however, I cannot but think such a man in some degree a respectable character, and am willing, at least, to do him honour, so far as I feel myself benefited by him. Ambition and the love of fame are certainly no Christian principles, but they are such as commonly belong to men of superior minds, and the fruits they produce may often plead their apology. The great men of the world are of a piece with the world to which they belong; they are raised up to govern it, and in the government of it are prompted by worldly motives: but it prospers, perhaps, under their management; and when it does, the Christian world, which is totally a distinct creation, partaking of the advantage, has cause to be thankful. The sun is a glorious creature; he does much good, but without intending it. I, however, who am conscious of the good he does, though I know not what religion he is of, or

whether he has any or none, rejoice in his effects, admire him, and am sensible that it is every man's duty to be thankful for him. In this sentiment I know you agree with me, for I believe he has not a warmer votary than yourself.

We say, the king can do no wrong; and it is well for poor George the Third that he cannot. In my opinion, however, he has lately been within a hair's-breadth of that predicament. His advisers, indeed, are guilty, and not he: but he will probably find, however hard it may seem, that if he can do no wrong, he may yet suffer the consequences of the wrong he cannot do. He has dismissed his servants, but not disgraced them; they triumph in their degradation, and no man is willing to supply their places. Must their offices remain unoccupied, or must they be courted to resume them? Never was such a distracted state of things within my remembrance; and I much fear that

this is but the beginning of sorrows. It is not a time of day for a king to take liberties with the people: there is a spirit in the Commons that will not endure it; and his Majesty's advisers must be less acquainted with the temper of the times than it is possible to suppose them, if they imagine that such strides of prerogative will not be resented. The address will gall him. I am sorry that he has exposed himself to such a reprehension, but I think it warranted by the occasion. I pity him; but king as he is, and much as I have always honoured him, had I been a member I should have voted for it.

I am obliged to Mr. Bacon for thinking of me. That expression, however, does not do justice to my feelings. Even with the little knowledge I have of him, I should love him, had I no reason to suppose myself at any time an object of his attention; but knowing that I am so happy as to have a share in his remembrance, I certainly love him the

more. Truly I am not in his debt: I cannot say wherefore it is so, but certainly few days pass in which I do not remember *him*. The print, indeed, with which he favoured me, and which is always in my view, must often suggest the recollection of him; but though I greatly value it, I do not believe it is my only prompter.

I finish with what I wish may make you laugh, as it did me. Mr. Scott, exhorting the people to frequent prayer, closed his address thus:—"You have nothing to do but to ask, and you will ever find Him ready to bestow. Open your wide mouths, and he will fill them."

Mrs. Unwin is well. Accept an old but a true conclusion--our united love to you and yours, and believe me, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate

W. C.

## TO MRS. HILL.

DEAR MADAM, Jan. 5, 1784.

You will readily pardon the trouble I give you by this line, when I plead my attention to your husband's convenience in my excuse. I know him to be so busy a man, that I cannot in conscience trouble him with a commission, which I know it is impossible he should have leisure to execute. After all, the labour would devolve upon you, and therefore I may as well address you in the first instance.

I have read, and return the books you were so kind as to procure for me. Mr. Hill gave me hopes, in his last, that from the library, to which I have subscribed, I might still be supplied with more. I have not many more to wish for, nor do I mean

to make any unreasonable use of your kindness. In about a fortnight I shall be favoured, by a friend in Essex, with as many as will serve me during the rest of the winter. In summer I read but little. In the mean time, I shall be much obliged to you for Forster's Narrative of the same Voyage, if your librarian has it; and likewise, for Swinburn's Travels, which Mr. Hill mentioned. If they can be sent at once, which perhaps the terms of subscription may not allow, I shall be glad to receive them so. If not, then Forster's first, and Swinburn afterwards: and Swinburn, at any rate, if Forster is not to be procured.

Reading over what I have written, I find it perfectly free and easy; so much indeed in that stile, that, had I not had repeated proofs of your good-nature in other instances, I should have modesty enough to suppress it, and attempt something more civil, and be-

coming a person who has never had the happiness of seeing you. But I have always observed, that sensible people are best pleased with what is natural and unaffected. Nor can I tell you a plainer truth, than that I am, without the least dissimulation, and with a warm remembrance of past favours,

My dear Madam,

Your affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

I beg to be remembered to Mr. Hill.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 8, 1784.

I wish you had more leisure, that you might oftener favour me with a page of politics. The authority of a newspaper is not of sufficient weight to determine my opinions, and I have no other documents to be set down by. I, therefore, on this sub-

ject, am suspended in a state of constant scepticism, the most uneasy condition in which the judgment can find itself. But *your* politics have weight with me, because I know your independent spirit, the justness of your reasonings, and the opportunities you have of information. But I know likewise the urgency and the multiplicity of your concerns; and, therefore, like a neglected clock, must be contented to go wrong, except when, perhaps twice in the year, you shall come to set me right.

Public credit is indeed shaken, and the funds at a low ebb. How can they be otherwise, when our western wing is already clipt to the stumps, and the shears, at this moment, threaten our eastern. Low, however, as our public stock is, it is not lower than my private one; and this being the article that touches me most nearly, at present, I shall be obliged to you, if you will

have recourse to such ways and means for the replenishment of my exchequer, as your wisdom may suggest, and your best ability suffice to execute. The experience I have had of your readiness upon all similar occasions, has been very agreeable to me; and I doubt not but upon the present I shall find you equally prompt to serve me. So,

Yours, ever,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1784.

The new year is already old in my account. I am not, indeed, sufficiently second-sighted to be able to boast by anticipation an acquaintance with the events of it yet unborn, but rest convinced that, be they what they may, not one of them comes a messenger of good to

me. If even death itself should be of the number, he is no friend of mine. It is an alleviation of the woes even of an unenlightened man, that he can wish for death, and indulge a hope, at least, that in death he shall find deliverance. But, loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a supposed probability of better things to come, were it once ended. For, more unhappy than the traveller with whom I set out*, pass through what difficulties I may, through whatever dangers and afflictions, I am not a whit the nearer home, unless a dungeon may be called so. This is no very agreeable theme, but in so great a dearth of subjects to write upon, and especially impressed as I am at this moment with a sense of my own condition, I could choose no other. The weather is an exact emblem of my mind in its present state. A thick fog envelopes every

* For the passage here alluded to, see the letter published by Mr. Hayley, under the date of Jan. 18, 1784.

thing, and at the same time it freezes intensely You will tell me that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavour to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it;—but it will be lost labour. Nature revives again; but a soul once slain lives no more. The hedge that has been apparently dead, is not so; it will burst into leaf and blossom at the appointed time; but no such time is appointed for the stake that stands in it. It is as dead as it seems, and will prove itself no dissembler. The latter end of next month will complete a period of eleven years in which I have spoken no other language. It is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness; long enough to make despair an inveterate habit, and such it is in me. My friends, I know, expect that I shall see yet again. They think it necessary to the existence of divine truth, that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the solidity of this reasoning in every

case but my own. And why not in my own? For causes which to them it appears madness to allege, but which rest upon my mind with a weight of immoveable conviction. If I am recoverable, why am I thus? why crippled and made useless in the church, just at that time of life, when, my judgment and experience being matured, I might be most useful. Why cashiered and turned out of service, till, according to the course of nature, there is not life enough left in me to make amends for the years I have lost; till there is no reasonable hope left that the fruit can ever pay the expense of the fallow? I forestal the answer:—God's ways are mysterious, and he giveth no account of his matters:—an answer that would serve my purpose as well as theirs that use it. There is a mystery in my destruction, and in time it shall be explained.

Yours,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 22, 1784.

I owe you thanks for your kind remembrance of me in your letter sent me on occasion of your departure, and as many for that which I received last night. I should have answered, had I known where a line or two from me might find you; but, uncertain whether you were at home or abroad, my diligence, I confess, wanted the necessary spur.

It makes a capital figure among the comforts we enjoyed during the long severity of the season, that the same *incognito* to all except ourselves, made us his almoners this year likewise, as he did the last, and to the same amount. Some we have been enabled, I suppose, to save from perishing, and certainly many from the most pinching necessity.

Are you not afraid, Tory as you are, to avow your principles to me, who am a Whig? Know that I am in the opposition; that though I pity the King, I do not wish him success in the present contest. But this is too long a battle to fight upon paper. Make haste that we may decide it face to face.

Our respects wait upon Mrs. Bull, and our love upon the young Hebræan. I wish you joy of his proficiency, and am glad that you can say, with the old man in Terence,

Omnes continuò laudare fortunas meas,
Qui natum habeam tali ingenio præditum.

Yours,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 19, 1784.

I converse, you say, upon other subjects than that of despair, and may therefore write upon others. Indeed, my friend, I am a man of very little conversation upon any subject. From that of despair I abstain as much as possible, for the sake of my company; but I will venture to say that it is never out of my mind one minute in the whole day. I do not mean to say that I am never cheerful. I am often so: always, indeed, when my nights have been undisturbed for a season. But the effect of such continual listening to the language of a heart hopeless and deserted, is, that I can never give much more than half my attention to what is started by others, and very rarely start any thing myself. My silence, however, and my absence of mind, make me sometimes as entertaining as if I had wit. They furnish an oc-

casion for friendly and good-natured raillery; they raise a laugh, and I partake of it. But you will easily perceive that a mind thus occupied is but indifferently qualified for the consideration of theological matters. The most useful and the most delightful topics of that kind are to me forbidden fruit;—I tremble if I approach them. It has happened to me sometimes that I have found myself imperceptibly drawn in, and made a party in such discourse. The consequence has been, dissatisfaction and self-reproach. You will tell me, perhaps, that I have written upon these subjects in verse, and may, therefore, if I please, in prose. But there is a difference. The search after poetical expression, the rhyme, and the numbers, are all affairs of some difficulty; they amuse, indeed, but are not to be attained without study, and engross, perhaps, a larger share of the attention than the subject itself. Persons fond of music will sometimes find pleasure in the tune, when the words afford them none. There are, however subjects

that do not always terrify me by their importance; such, I mean, as relate to Christian life and manners; and when such an one presents itself, and finds me in a frame of mind that does not absolutely forbid the employment, I shall most readily give it my attention, for the sake, however, of your request merely. Verse is my favourite occupation, and what I compose in that way, I reserve for my own use hereafter.

I have lately finished eight volumes of Johnson's Prefaces, or Lives of the Poets. In all that number I observe but one man—a poet of no great fame—of whom I did not know that he existed till I found him there, whose mind seems to have had the slightest tincture of religion; and he was hardly in his senses. His name was Collins. He sunk into a state of melancholy, and died young. Not long before his death, he was found at his lodgings in Islington by his biographer, with the New

Testament in his hand. He said to Johnson, "I have but one book, but it is the best." Of him, therefore, there are some hopes. But from the lives of all the rest there is but one inference to be drawn: that poets are a very worthless, wicked set of people.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,

W.ᵐ C.

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TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, March 21, 1784.

I thank you for the entertainment you have afforded me. I often wish for a library, often regret my folly in selling a good collection, but I have one in Essex. It is rather remote, indeed, too distant for occasional reference; but it serves the purpose of amusement, and a waggon being a very suitable vehicle for an author, I find myself commodi-

ously supplied. Last night I made an end of reading Johnson's Prefaces; but the number of poets whom he has vouchsafed to chronicle, being fifty-six, there must be many with whose history I am not yet acquainted. These, or some of these, if it suits you to give them a part of your chaise, when you come, will be heartily welcome. I am very much the biographer's humble admirer. His uncommon share of good sense, and his forcible expression, secure to him that tribute from all his readers. He has a penetrating insight into character, and a happy talent of correcting the popular opinion, upon all occasions where it is erroneous; and this he does with the boldness of a man who will think for himself, but, at the same time, with a justness of sentiment that convinces us he does not differ from others through affectation, but because he has a sounder judgment. This remark, however, has his narrative for its object, rather than his critical performance. In the latter, I do not

think him always just, when he departs from the general opinion. He finds no beauties in Milton's Lycidas. He pours contempt upon Prior, to such a degree, that were he really as undeserving of notice, as he represents him, he ought no longer to be numbered among the poets. These, indeed, are the two capital instances in which he has offended me. There are others less important, which I have not room to enumerate, and in which I am less confident that he is wrong. What suggested to him the thought that the Alma was written in imitation of Hudibras, I cannot conceive. In former years, they were both favourites of mine, and I often read them; but never saw in them the least resemblance to each other; nor do I now, except that they are composed in verse of the same measure. After all, it is a melancholy observation, which it is impossible not to make, after having run through this series of poetical lives, that where there were such shining talents, there should be so

little virtue. These luminaries of our country seem to have been kindled into a brighter blaze than others, only that their spots might be more noticed! So much can nature do for our intellectual part, and so little for our moral. What vanity, what petulance in Pope! How painfully sensible of censure, and yet how restless in provocation! To what mean artifices could Addison stoop, in hopes of injuring the reputation of his friend! Savage, how sordidly vicious, and the more condemned for the pains that are taken to palliate his vices. Offensive as they appear through a veil, how would they disgust without one. What a sycophant to the public taste was Dryden; sinning against his feelings, lewd in his writings, though chaste in his conversation. I know not but one might search these eight volumes with a candle, as the prophet says, to find a man, and not find one, unless, perhaps, Arbuthnot were he. I shall begin Beattie this evening, and propose to myself much satis-

faction in reading him. In him, at least, I shall find a man whose faculties have now and then a glimpse from Heaven upon them; — a man, not indeed in possession of much evangelical light, but faithful to what he has, and never neglecting an opportunity to use it! How much more respectable such a character, than that of thousands who would call him blind, and yet have not the grace to practise half his virtues! He, too, is a poet, and wrote the Minstrel. The specimens which I have seen of it pleased me much. If you have the whole, I should be glad to read it. I may, perhaps, since you allow me the liberty, indulge myself here and there, with a marginal annotation, but shall not use that allowance wantonly, so as to deface the volumes.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, April 25, 1784.

Thanks for the fish, with its companion, a lobster, which we mean to eat to-morrow.

To the immortal memory of the Halybutt,
on which I dined this day,
Monday, April 26, 1784.

Where hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? when wast thou an egg new-spawn'd,
Lost in th' immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,

Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
Above the brine—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulph,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot, thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 10, 1784.

We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof of the omnipotence of Grace; and the more singular, the more decided. The world will set his age against his wisdom, and comfort itself with the thought that he must be superannuated. Perhaps, therefore, in order to refute the slander, and do honour to the cause to which he becomes a convert, he could not do better than devote his great abilities, and a considerable part of the remainder of his years, to the production of some important work, not immediately connected with the interests of religion. He would thus give proof, that a man of profound learning, and the best sense, may become a child without being a fool; and that

to embrace the gospel, is no evidence either of enthusiasm, infirmity, or insanity. But He who calls him will direct him.

On Friday, by particular invitation, we attended an attempt to throw off a balloon at Mr. Throckmorton's, but it did not succeed. We expect, however, to be summoned again in the course of the ensuing week. Mrs. Unwin and I were the party. We were entertained with the utmost politeness. It is not possible to conceive a more engaging and agreeable character than the Gentleman's, or a more consummate assemblage of all that is called good-nature, complaisance, and innocent cheerfulness, than is to be seen in the Lady. They have lately received many gross affronts from the people of this place, on account of their religion. We thought it, therefore, the more necessary to treat them with respect.

Best love, and best wishes,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 21, 1784.

We are much pleased with your designed improvement of the late preposterous celebrity, and have no doubt that, in good hands, the foolish occasion will turn to good account. A religious service, instituted in honour of a musician, and performed in the house of God, is a subject that calls loudly for the animadversion of an enlightened minister; and would be no mean one for a satirist, could a poet of that description be found spiritual enough to feel and to resent the profanation. It is reasonable to suppose, that in the next year's almanack we shall find the name of Handel among the red-lettered worthies, for it would surely puzzle the Pope to add any thing to his canonization.

This unpleasant summer makes me wish for winter. The gloominess of that season is the

less felt, both because it is expected, and because the days are short. But such weather, when the days are longest, makes a double winter, and my spirits feel that it does. We have now frosty mornings, and so cold a wind, that even at high noon we have been obliged to break off our walk in the southern side of the garden, and seek shelter, I in the greenhouse, and Mrs. Unwin by the fire-side. Haymaking begins here to-morrow, and would have begun sooner, had the weather permitted it.

Mr. Wright called upon us last Sunday. The old gentleman seems happy in being exempted from the effects of time, to such a degree, that, though we meet but once in the year, I cannot perceive that the twelve months that have elapsed have made any change in him. It seems, however, that as much as he loves his master, and as easy as I suppose he has always found his service, he now and then heaves a sigh for liberty, and wishes to taste it before

he dies. But his wife is not so minded. She cannot leave a family, the sons and daughters of which seem all to be her own. Her brother died lately in the East Indies, leaving twenty thousand pounds behind him, and half of it to her; but the ship that was bringing home this treasure, is supposed to be lost. Her husband appears perfectly unaffected by the misfortune, and she, perhaps, may even be glad of it. Such an acquisition would have forced her into a state of independence, and have made her her own mistress; whether she would or not. I charged him with a petition to Lord Dartmouth, to send me Cook's last Voyage, which I have a great curiosity to see, and no other means of procuring. I dare say I shall obtain the favour, and have great pleasure in taking my last trip with a voyager whose memory I respect so much. Farewell, my dear friend: our affectionate remembrances are faithful to you and yours.

W. C.

## TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 3, [probably 1784.]

I ask pardon for neglecting a subject on which you consulted me in your last. It is too much my practice to reply to a letter without reading it at the time; and, on this occasion, my memory failed me. I am no friend to Lilly's Grammar, though I was indebted to him for my first introduction to the Latin language. The grammars used at Westminster, both for the Latin and the Greek, are those to which, if I had a young man to educate, I should give the preference. They have the merit of being compendious and perspicuous, in both which properties I judge Lilly to be defective. If I am not mistaken, however, they are in use at the Charter-house, so that I have no need to describe them to *you*. They are called Busby's Grammars, though Busby did not compose them. The compi-

lation was a task imposed upon his uppermost boys, the plan only being drawn by the master, and the versification, which I have often admired for the ingenuity of it, being theirs. I never knew a boy of any abilities, who had taken his notion of language from these grammars, that was not accurate to a degree that distinguished him from most others.

I am writing in the green-house for retirement sake, where I shiver with cold on this present third of July. Summer and winter, therefore, do not depend on the position of the sun with respect to the earth, but on *His* appointment who is sovereign in all things. Last Saturday night the cold was so severe, that it pinched off many of the young shoots of our peach-trees. The nurseryman we deal with informs me, that the wall-trees are almost every where cut off; and that a friend of his, near London, has lost all the full-grown fruit-trees of an extensive garden. The very walnuts, which are now no bigger than small

hazel-nuts, drop to the ground; and the flowers, though they blow, seem to have lost all their odours. I walked with your mother yesterday in the garden, wrapped up in a winter surtout, and found myself not at all incumbered by it; not more, indeed, than I was in January. Cucumbers contract that spot which is seldom found upon them except late in the autumn; and melons hardly grow. It is a comfort, however, to reflect, that if we cannot have these fruits in perfection, neither do we want them. Our crops of wheat are said to be very indifferent; the stalks of an unequal height, so that some of the ears are in danger of being smothered by the rest; and the ears, in general, lean and scanty. I never knew a summer in which we had not now and then a cold day to conflict with; but such a wintry fortnight as the last, at this season of the year, I never remember. I fear you have made a discovery of the webs you mention a day too late. The vermin have probably by this time

left them, and may laugh at all human attempts to destroy them. For every web they have hung upon the trees and bushes this year, you will next year probably find fifty, perhaps an hundred. Their increase is almost infinite; so that, if Providence does not interfere, and man see fit to neglect them, the laughers you mention may live to be sensible of their mistake.

Love to all.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 19, 1784.

Notwithstanding the justness of the comparison by which you illustrate the folly and wickedness of a congregation assembled to pay divine honours to the memory of Handel, I could not help laughing at the

picture you have drawn of the musical convicts. The subject indeed is awful, and your manner of representing it is perfectly just; yet I laughed, and must have laughed had I been one of your hearers. But the ridicule lies in the preposterous conduct which you reprove, and not in your reproof of it. A people so musically mad as to make not only their future trial the subject of a concert, but even the message of mercy from their King, and the only one he will ever send them, must excuse me if I am merry where there is more cause to be sad; for melancholy as their condition is, their behaviour under it is too ludicrous not to be felt as such, and would conquer even a more settled gravity than mine.*

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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* What Mr. Hayley has introduced under the date of this letter immediately follows, and is strikingly illustrative of the foregoing observations.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 30, 1784.

I am now reading a book which you have never read, and will probably never read—Knox's Essays. Perhaps I should premise, that I am driven to such reading by the want of books that would please me better, neither having any, nor the means of procuring any. I am not sorry, however, that I have met with him; though when I have allowed him the praise of being a sensible man, and in *his* way a good one, I have allowed him all that I can afford. Neither his stile pleases me, which is sometimes insufferably dry and hard, and sometimes ornamented even to an Harveian tawdriness; nor his manner, which is never lively without being the worse for it: so unhappy is he in his attempts at character and narration. But writ-

ing chiefly on the manners, vices, and follies of the modern day, to me he is at least so far useful, as that he gives me information upon points concerning which I neither *can* nor *would* be informed except by hearsay. Of such information, however, I have need, being a writer upon those subjects myself, and a satirical writer too. It is fit, therefore, in order that I may find fault in the right place, that I should know where fault may properly be found.

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 4, 1784.

You have my hearty thanks for a very good barrel of oysters; which necessary acknowledgment once made, I might perhaps show

more kindness by cutting short an epistle, than by continuing one, in which you are not likely to find your account, either in the way of information or amusement. The season of the year, indeed, is not very friendly to such communications. A damp atmosphere and a sunless sky will have their effect upon the spirits; and when the spirits are checked, farewell to all hope of being good company, either by letter or otherwise. I envy those happy voyagers, who, with so much ease, ascend to regions unsullied with a cloud, and date their epistles from an extra-mundane situation. No wonder if they outshine us who poke about in the dark below, in the vivacity of their sallies, as much as they soar above us in their excursions. Not but that I should be very sorry to go to the clouds for wit: on the contrary, I am satisfied that I discover more by continuing where I am. Every man to his business. Their vocation is, to see fine prospects, and to make

pithy observations upon the world below; such as these, for instance: that the earth, beheld from a height that one trembles to think of, has the appearance of a circular plain; that England is a very rich and cultivated country, in which every man's property is ascertained by the hedges that intersect the lands; and that London and Westminster, seen from the neighbourhood of the moon, make but an insignificant figure. I admit the utility of these remarks; but, in the mean time, as I say, *chacun à son goût;* and mine is rather to creep than fly; and to carry with me, if possible, an unbroken neck to the grave.

I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Jan. 5, 1785.

* * * * * * * *

I have observed, and you must have had occasion to observe it oftener than I, that when a man, who once seemed to be a Christian, has put off that character, and resumed his old one, he loses, together with the grace which he seemed to possess, the most amiable part of the character that he resumes. The best features of his natural face seem to be struck out, that, after having worn religion only as a handsome mask, he may make a more disgusting appearance than he did before he assumed it.

According to your request, I subjoin my Epitaph on Dr. Johnson; at least I mean to do it, if a drum, which at this moment announces the arrival of a giant in the town, will

give me leave. I have not yet sent the copy to the Magazine.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

Here Johnson lies—a sage, by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last—alone worth all the rest.
Oh man immortal by a double prize,
On earth by fame, by favour in the skies!*

Mr. ——— has quitted the country, having neither left admirers behind him, nor taken any with him; unless perhaps his wife be one,

* By referring to the 8vo edition of Hayley's Life of Cowper, vol. ii, p. 275, the reader will perceive that the conclusion of the Epitaph was afterwards varied.

which admits some doubt. He quarrelled with most of his acquaintance, and the rest grew sick of him. He even quarrelled with his auctioneer in the midst of the sale of his goods, and would not permit him to proceed, finishing that matter himself.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 22, 1785.

The departure of the long frost, by which we were pinched and squeezed together for three weeks, is a most agreeable circumstance. The weather is now (to speak poetically) genial and jocund; and the appearance of the sun, after so tedious an eclipse, peculiarly welcome. For were it not that I have a gravel-walk about sixty yards long, where

I take my daily exercise, I should be obliged to look at a fine day through the window, without any other enjoyment of it;—a country rendered impassable by frost, that has been at last resolved into rottenness, keeps me so close a prisoner. Long live the inventors and improvers of balloons! It is always clear overhead, and by and by we shall use no other road.

How will the Parliament employ themselves when they meet?—to any purpose, or to none, or only to a bad one? They are utterly out of my favour. I despair of them altogether. Will they pass an act for the cultivation of the royal wildernesses? Will they make effectual provision for a northern fishery? Will they establish a new sinking-fund, that shall infallibly pay off the national debt? I say nothing about a more equal representation, because, unless they bestow upon private gentlemen of no property a privilege of voting, I stand no chance of ever being represented

myself. Will they achieve all these wonders, or none of them? And shall I derive no other advantage from the great Wittena-Gemot of the nation, than merely to read their debates, for twenty folios of which I would not give one farthing?

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Olney, Feb. 19, 1785.

I am obliged to you for apprising me of the various occasions of delay to which your letters are liable. Furnished with such a key, I shall be able to account for any accidental tardiness, without supposing any thing worse than that you yourself have been interrupted, or that your messenger has not been punctual.

Mr. Teeden has just left us. He came to exhibit to us a specimen of his kinsman's skill in the art of book-binding. The book on which he had exercised his ingenuity was your Life. You did not, indeed, make a very splendid appearance; but, considering that you were dressed by an untaught artificer, and that it was his first attempt, you had no cause to be dissatisfied. The young man has evidently the possession of talents, by which he might shine both for the benefit of others and for his own, did not his situation smother him. He can make a dulcimer, tune it, play upon it, and with common advantages would undoubtedly have been able to make an harpsichord. But, unfortunately, he lives where neither the one nor the other are at all in vogue. He can convert the shell of a cocoa-nut into a decent drinking-cup; but when he has done, he must either fill it at the pump, or use it merely as an ornament of his own mantle-tree. In like manner, he can bind a book; but if he would

have books to bind, he must either make them or buy them, for we have few or no literati at Olney. Some men have talents with which they do mischief; and others have talents with which, if they do no mischief to others, at least they can do but little good to themselves. They are, however, always a blessing, unless by our own folly we make them a curse; for if we cannot turn them to a lucrative account, they may however furnish us, at many a dull season, with the means of innocent amusement. Such is the use that Mr. Killingworth makes of his; and this evening we have, I think, made him happy, having furnished him with two octavo volumes, in which the principles and practice of all ingenious arts are inculcated and explained. I make little doubt that, by the half of it, he will in time be able to perform many feats, for which he will never be one farthing the richer, but by which, nevertheless, himself and his kin will be much diverted.

How much better is he employed than a neighbour of ours has been for many years, whose sole occupation, although he too is naturally ingenious, has centred in filling his glass and emptying it. He is neither unknown nor much known to you, but you remember him by the name of —— ——. He is now languishing in a dropsy, and, in the prime of life, labouring under all the infirmities of age. He solaces himself, I am told, with the recollection of somewhat that passed in his experience many years ago, which, although it has been followed by no better fruits than will grow at an alehouse, he dignifies with the name of Conversion. Sows are so converted when they are washed, and give the same evidence of an unchanged nature by returning to the mire. Mr. ——, whose daughter he married, often visits him, but declares, that of all the insensibles he ever saw, poor —— is the most completely stupid. So long as he was able to crawl into the street, his journey was to the Royal Oak

and home again; and so punctual were we both, I in cleaning my teeth at my window, and he in drinking his dram at the same time, that I seldom failed to observe him. But both his legs are now blistered, and refuse to assist him in poisoning himself any longer.

The winter returning upon us at this late season with redoubled severity, is an event unpleasant even to us who are well furnished with fuel, and seldom feel much of it, unless when we step into bed or get out of it; but how much more formidable to the poor! When ministers talk of resources, that word never fails to send my imagination into the mud-wall cottages of our poor at Olney. There I find assembled, in one individual, the miseries of age, sickness, and the extremest penury. We have many such instances around us. The parish, perhaps, allows such an one a shilling a week; but, being numbed with cold, and crippled by

disease, she cannot possibly earn herself another. Such persons, therefore, suffer all that famine can inflict upon them, only that they are not actually starved; a catastrophe which, to many of them, I suppose, would prove a happy release. One cause of all this misery is, the exorbitant taxation with which the country is encumbered; so that, to the poor, the few pence they are able to procure have almost lost their value. Yet the budget will be opened soon, and soon we shall hear of resources. But I could conduct the statesman, who rolls down to the House in a chariot as splendid as that of Phaeton, into scenes that, if he had any sensibility for the woes of others, would make him tremble at the mention of the word.—This, however, is not what I intended when I began this paragraph. I was going to observe, that of all the winters we have passed at Olney, and this is the seventeenth, the present has confined us most. Thrice, and but thrice, since the

middle of October, have we escaped into the fields for a little fresh air, and a little change of motion. The last time, indeed, it was at some peril that we did it, Mrs. Unwin having slipped into a ditch, and, though I performed the part of an active 'squire upon the occasion, escaped out of it upon her hands and knees.

If the town afford any other news than I here send you, it has not reached me yet. I am in perfect health, at least of body, and Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well. Adieu! We remember you always, you and yours, with as much affection as you can desire; which being said, and said truly, leaves me quite at a loss for any other conclusion than that of

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 27, 1785.

I write merely to inquire after your health, and with a sincere desire to hear that you are better. Horace somewhere advises his friend to give his client the slip, and come and spend the evening with him. I am not so inconsiderate as to recommend the same measure to you, because we are not such very near neighbours as a trip of that sort requires that we should be. But I do verily wish that you would favour me with just five minutes of the time that properly belongs to your clients, and place it to my account. Employ it, I mean, in telling me that you are better at least, if not recovered.

I have been pretty much indisposed myself since I wrote last; but, except in point of strength, am now as well as before. My

disorder was what is commonly called and best understood by the name of a thorough cold; which, being interpreted, no doubt you will know, signifies shiverings, aches, burnings, lassitude, together with many other ills that flesh is heir to. James's Powder is my nostrum on all such occasions, and never fails.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 19, 1785.

You will wonder, no doubt, when I tell you that I write upon a card-table; and will be still more surprised when I add, that we breakfast, dine, sup, upon a card-table. In short, it serves all purposes, except the only one for which it was originally designed. The solution of this mystery shall follow, lest it should run in your head at a wrong time, and

should puzzle you, perhaps, when you are on the point of ascending your pulpit: for I have heard you say, that at such seasons your mind is often troubled with impertinent intrusions. The round table, which we formerly had in use, was unequal to the pressure of my superincumbent breast and elbows. When I wrote upon it, it creaked and tilted, and, by a variety of inconvenient tricks, disturbed the process. The fly-table was too slight and too small; the square dining-table, too heavy and too large, occupying, when its leaves were spread, almost the whole parlour; and the sideboard-table, having its station at too great a distance from the fire, and not being easily shifted out of its place and into it again, by reason of its size, was equally unfit for my purpose. The card-table, therefore, which had for sixteen years been banished as mere lumber; the card-table, which is covered with green baize, and is, therefore, preferable to any other that has a slippery surface; the card-table, that stands

firm and never totters,—is advanced to the honour of assisting me upon my scribbling occasions; and, because we choose to avoid the trouble of making frequent changes in the position of our household furniture, proves equally serviceable upon all others. It has cost us now and then the downfal of a glass: for, when covered with a table-cloth, the fish-ponds are not easily discerned; and not being seen, are sometimes as little thought of. But having numerous good qualities which abundantly compensate that single inconvenience, we spill upon it our coffee, our wine, and our ale, without murmuring, and resolve that it shall be our table still, to the exclusion of all others. Not to be tedious, I will add but one more circumstance upon the subject, and that only because it will impress upon you, as much as any thing that I have said, a sense of the value we set upon its escritorial capacity.—Parched and penetrated on one side by the heat of the fire, it has opened into a large fis-

sure, which pervades not the moulding of it only, but the very substance of the plank. At the mouth of this aperture, a sharp splinter presents itself, which, as sure as it comes in contact with a gown or an apron, tears it. It happens, unfortunately, to be on that side of this excellent and never-to-be-forgotten table which Mrs. Unwin sweeps with her apparel, almost as often as she rises from her chair. The consequences need not, to use the fashionable phrase, be given in detail: but the needle sets all to rights; and the card-table still holds possession of its functions without a rival.

Clean roads and milder weather have once more released us, opening a way for our escape into our accustomed walks. We have both, I believe, been sufferers by such a long confinement. Mrs. Unwin has had a nervous fever all the winter, and I a stomach that has quarrelled with every thing, and not seldom even with its bread and butter. Her com-

plaint, I hope, is at length removed; but mine seems more obstinate, giving way to nothing that I can oppose to it, except just in the moment when the opposition is made. I ascribe this malady—both our maladies, indeed—in a great measure, to our want of exercise. We have each of us practised more, in other days, than lately we have been able to take; and for my own part, till I was more than thirty years old, it was almost essential to my comfort to be perpetually in motion. My constitution, therefore, misses, I doubt not, its usual aids of this kind; and unless, for purposes which I cannot foresee, Providence should interpose to prevent it, will probably reach the moment of its dissolution the sooner for being so little disturbed. A vitiated digestion, I believe, always terminates, if not cured, in the production of some chronical disorder. In several I have known it produce a dropsy. But no matter. Death is inevitable; and whether we die to-day or to-morrow, a watery death

or a dry one, is of no consequence. The state of our spiritual health is all. Could I discover a few more symptoms of convalescence there, this body might moulder into its original dust without one sigh from me. Nothing of all this did I mean to say; but I have said it, and must now seek another subject.

One of our most favourite walks is spoiled. The spinney is cut down to the stumps: even the lilacs and the syringas, to the stumps. Little did I think, (though indeed I might have thought it,) that the trees which skreened me from the sun last summer would this winter be employed in roasting potatoes and boiling tea-kettles for the poor of Olney. But so it has proved; and we ourselves have, at this moment, more than two waggon-loads of them in our wood-loft.

Such various services can trees perform;
Whom once they skreen'd from heat, in time they warm.

The mention of the poor reminds me of saying, in answer to your application in behalf of the F——'s, that they long since received a portion of their nameless benefactor's annual remittance. Mrs. Unwin sent them more than twelve pounds of beef, and two gallon loaves.

A letter from Manchester reached our town last Sunday, addressed to the Mayor or other chief magistrate of Olney. The purport of it was, to excite him and his neighbours to petition Parliament against the concessions to Ireland that Government has in contemplation. Mr. Maurice Smith, as constable, took the letter. But whether that most respectable personage amongst us intends to comply with the terms of it, or not, I am ignorant. For myself, however, I can pretty well answer, that I shall sign no petition of the sort; both because I do not think myself competent to a right understanding of the question, and because it appears to me, that, whatever be

the event, no place in England can be less concerned in it than Olney.

We rejoice that you are all well. Our love attends Mrs. Newton and yourself, and the young ladies.

I am yours, my dear friend, as usual,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 9, 1785.

In a letter to the printer of the Northampton Mercury, we have the following history.—An ecclesiastic of the name of Zichen, German superintendant or Lutheran bishop of Zetterfeldt, in the year 1779 delivered to the Courts of Hanover and Brunswick a prediction to the following purport. That an earthquake is at hand, the greatest and most

destructive ever known; that it will originate in the Alps and in their neighbourhood, especially at Mount St. Gothard; at the foot of which mountain, it seems, four rivers have their source, of which the Rhine is one. The names of the rest I have forgotten. They are all to be swallowed up. That the earth will open into an immense fissure, which will divide all Europe, reaching from the aforesaid mountain to the states of Holland; that the Zuyder Sea will be absorbed in the gulf; that the Bristol Channel will be no more: in short, that the North of Europe will be separated from the South, and that seven thousand cities, towns, and villages, will be destroyed. This prediction he delivered at the aforesaid Courts, in the year seventy-nine, asserting, that in February following the commotion would begin, and that by Easter 1786, the whole would be accomplished. Accordingly, between the fifteenth and twenty-seventh of February, in the year eighty, the public gazettes

and newspapers took notice of several earthquakes in the Alps, and in the regions at their foot; particularly about Mount St. Gothard. From this partial fulfilment, Mr. O—— argues the probability of a complete one, and exhorts the world to watch and be prepared. He adds, moreover, that Mr. Zichen was a pious man, a man of science, and a man of sense; and that when he gave in his writing, he offered to swear to it—I suppose, as a revelation from above. He is since dead.

Nothing in the whole affair pleases me so much, as that he has named a short day for the completion of his prophecy. It is tedious work to hold the judgment in suspense for many years; but any body, methinks, may wait with patience till a twelvemonth shall pass away, especially when an earthquake of such magnitude is in question. I do not say that Mr. Zichen is deceived; but if he be not, I will say that he is the first modern prophet

who has not both been a subject of deception himself, and a deceiver of others. A year will show.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her letter. We hope that Patty has been falsely accused. But, however that may be, we see great cause to admire either the cogency of her arguments, or her husband's openness to conviction, who, by a single box on the ear, was so effectually assured of the innocence of his wife, as to become more attached to her than ever. For the sake of good husbands, it is to be hoped that she will keep her nostrum a secret, or communicate it only to ladies in her own predicament, who have need of the most forcible proofs of their integrity.

Our love attends all your family. Believe me, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 22, 1785.

When I received your account of the great celebrity of John Gilpin, I felt myself both flattered and grieved. Being man, and having in my composition all the ingredients of which other men are made, and vanity among the rest, it pleased me to reflect that I was on a sudden become so famous, and that all the world was busy enquiring after me: but the next moment, recollecting my former self, and that thirteen years ago, as harmless as John's history is, I should not then have written it, my spirits sank, and I was ashamed of my success. Your letter was followed the next post by one from Mr. Unwin. You tell me that I am rivalled by Mrs. Bellamy; and he, that I have a competitor for fame, not less for-

midable, in the Learned Pig. Alas! what is an author's popularity worth, in a world that can suffer a prostitute on one side, and a pig on the other, to eclipse his brightest glories? I am therefore sufficiently humbled by these considerations; and unless I should hereafter be ordained to engross the public attention by means more magnificent than a song, am persuaded that I shall suffer no real detriment by their applause. I have produced many things, under the influence of despair, which hope would not have permitted to spring. But if the soil of that melancholy, in which I have walked so long, has thrown up here and there an unprofitable fungus, it is well, at least, that it is not chargeable with having brought forth poison. Like you, I see, or think I can see, that Gilpin may have his use. Causes, in appearance trivial, produce often the most beneficial consequences; and perhaps my volumes may now travel to a distance, which, if they had not been usher-

ed into the world by that notable horseman, they would never have reached. Our temper differs somewhat from that of the ancient Jews. They would neither dance nor weep. We indeed weep not, if a man mourn unto us; but I must needs say, that, if he pipe, we seem disposed to dance with the greatest alacrity.

Yours,

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May, 1785.

I do not know that I shall send you news; but, whether it be news or not, it is necessary that I should relate the fact, lest I should omit an article of intelligence important at least at Olney. The event took place much nearer to you than to us, and yet it is possible

that no account of it may yet have reached you.—Mr. Ashburner, the elder, went to London on Tuesday se'nnight in perfect health and in high spirits, so as to be remarkably cheerful; and was brought home in an hearse the Friday following. Soon after his arrival in town, he complained of an acute pain in his elbow, then in his shoulder, then in both shoulders; was blooded; took two doses of such medicine as an apothecary thought might do him good; and died on Thursday, in the morning, at ten o'clock. When I first heard the tidings, I could hardly credit them; and yet have lived long enough myself to have seen manifold and most convincing proofs, that neither health, great strength, nor even youth itself, afford the least security from the stroke of death. It is not common, however, for men at the age of thirty-six to die so suddenly. I saw him but a few days before, with a bundle of gloves and hatbands under his arm, at the door of Geary Ball, who lay

at that time a corpse. The following day, I saw him march before the coffin, and lead the procession that attended Geary to the grave. He might be truly said to march, for his step was heroic, his figure athletic, and his countenance as firm and confident as if he had been born only to bury others, and was sure never to be buried himself. Such he appeared to me, while I stood at the window and contemplated his deportment; and then he died.

I am sensible of the tenderness and affectionate kindness with which you recollect our past intercourse, and express your hopes of my future restoration. I, too, within the last eight months, have had my hopes, though they have been of short duration; cut off, like the foam upon the waters. Some previous adjustments, indeed, are necessary, before a lasting expectation of comfort can have place in me. There are those persuasions in my

mind which either entirely forbid the entrance of hope, or, if it enter, immediately eject it. They are incompatible with any such inmate, and must be turned out themselves before so desirable a guest can possibly have secure possession. This, you say, will be done. It may be, but it is not done yet; nor has a single step in the course of God's dealings with me been taken towards it. If I mend, no creature ever mended so slowly that recovered at last. I am like a slug or snail, that has fallen into a deep well: slug as he is, he performs his descent with an alacrity proportioned to his weight; but he does not crawl up again quite so fast. Mine was a rapid plunge; but my return to daylight, if I am indeed returning, is leisurely enough.—I wish you a swift progress, and a pleasant one, through the great subject that you have in hand; and set that value upon your letters to which they are in themselves entitled, but which is certainly encreased by that

peculiar attention which the writer of them pays to me. Were I such as I once was, I should say that I have a claim upon your particular notice which nothing ought to supersede. Most of your other connexions you may fairly be said to have formed by your own act; but your connexion with me was the work of God. The kine that went up with the ark from Beth-shemesh left what they loved behind them, in obedience to an impression which to them was perfectly dark and unintelligible. Your journey to Huntingdon was not less wonderful. He, indeed, who sent you, knew well wherefore, but you knew not. That dispensation, therefore, would furnish me, as long as we can both remember it, with a plea for some distinction at your hands, had I occasion to use and urge it, which I have not. But I am altered since that time; and if your affection for me had ceased, you might very reasonably justify your change by mine. I can say nothing for myself at pre-

sent; but this I can venture to foretell, that should the restoration of which my friends assure me obtain, I shall undoubtedly love those who have continued to love me, even in a state of transformation from my former self, much more than ever. I doubt not that Nebuchadnezzar had friends in his prosperity; all kings have many. But when his nails became like eagles' claws, and he ate grass like an ox, I suppose he had few to pity him.

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I am glad that Johnson is in fact a civiller man than I supposed him. My quarrel with him was not for any stricture of his upon my poetry, (for he has made several, and many of them have been judicious, and my work will be the better for them,) but for a certain rudeness with which he questioned my judgment of a writer of the last century, though I only mention the effect that his verses had upon me

when a boy. There certainly was at the time a bustle in his temper, occasioned, I imagine, by my being a little importunate with him to proceed. He has, however, recovered himself since; and, except that the press seems to have stood still this last week, has printed as fast as I could wish. Had he kept the same pace from the beginning, the book had been published, as indeed it ought to have been, three months ago. That evil report of his indolence reaches me from every body that knows him, and is so general, that had I a work, or the publication of one in hand, the expenses of which I intended to take the hazard of upon myself, I should be very much afraid to employ him. He who will neglect himself cannot well be expected to attend to the interests of another.

We are going to pay Mr. Pomfret a morning visit. Our errand is to see a fine bed of tulips, a sight that I never saw. Fine painting, and God the artist.—Mrs. Unwin has something

to say in the cover. I leave her therefore to make her own courtesy, and only add that I am yours and Mrs. Newton's

Affectionate

W. C.

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TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 4, 1785.

Mr. Greatheed had your letter the day after we received it. He is a well-bred, agreeable young man, and one whose eyes have been opened, I doubt not, for the benefit of others, as well as for his own. He preached at Olney, a day or two ago, and I have reason to think with acceptance and success. One person, at least, who had been in prison some weeks, received his enlargement under him. I should have been glad to have been a hearer; but that privilege is not allowed me yet. Indeed,

since I told you that I had hope, I have never ceased to despair; and have repented that I made my boast so soon, more than once. A king may forbid a man to appear before him, and it were strange if the King of kings might not do the same. I know it to be his will that I should not enter into his presence now; when the prohibition is taken off, I shall enter; but in the mean time I should neither please him, nor serve myself, by intruding.

My book is at length printed, and I returned the last proof to Johnson on Tuesday. I have ordered a copy to Charles Square, and have directed Johnson to enclose one with it, addressed to John Bacon, Esq. I was obliged to give you this trouble, not being sure of the place of his abode. I have taken the liberty to mention him, as an artist, in terms that he well deserves. The passage was written soon after I received the engraving with which he favoured me, and while the impression that it

made upon me was yet warm. He will, therefore, excuse the liberty that I have taken, and place it to the account of those feelings which he himself excited.

The walking season is returned. We visit the wilderness daily. Mr. Throckmorton, last summer, presented me with a key of his garden. The family are all absent, except the priest and a servant or two; so that the honeysuckles, lilacs, and syringas, are all our own.

We are well, and our united love attends yourselves and the young ladies.

Yours, my dear friend,

With much affection,

W. C.

## TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 25, 1785.

A note that we received from Mr. Scott, by your desire, informing us of the amendment of Mrs. Newton's health, demands our thanks, having relieved us from no little anxiety upon her account. The welcome purport of it was soon after confirmed by Sally Johnson, so that, at present, we feel ourselves at liberty to hope that by this time Mrs. Newton's recovery is complete. Sally's looks do credit to the air of Hoxton. She seems to have lost nothing, either in complexion or dimensions, by her removal hence; and, which is still more to the credit of your great town, she seems in spiritual things also, to be the very same Sally whom we knew once at Olney. Situation, therefore, is nothing. They who have the means of grace, and an art to use them, will thrive any where; others nowhere.

More than a few, who were formerly ornaments of this garden which you once watered, here flourished, and here have seemed to wither. Others, transplanted into a soil apparently less favourable to their growth, either find the exchange an advantage, or at least are not impaired by it. Of myself, who had once both leaves and fruit, but who have now neither, I say nothing; or only this,—That when I am overwhelmed with despair, I repine at my barrenness, and think it hard to be thus blighted; but when a glimpse of hope breaks in upon me, I am contented to be the sapless thing I am, knowing that He who has commanded me to wither, can command me to flourish again, when He pleases. My experiences, however, of this latter kind, are rare and transient. The light that reaches me cannot be compared either to that of the sun or of the moon. It is a flash in a dark night, during which the heavens seem opened only to shut again.

We enquired, but could not learn, that any thing memorable passed in the last moments of poor Nathan. I listened in expectation that he would at least acknowledge what all who knew him in his more lively days had so long seen and lamented, his neglect of the best things, and his eager pursuit of riches. But he was totally silent upon that subject. Yet it was evident that the cares of this world had choked in him much of the good seed, and that he was no longer the Nathan whom we have so often heard at the old house, rich in spirit, though poor in expression; whose desires were unutterable in every sense, both because they were too big for language, and because Nathan had no language for them. I believe with you, however, that he is safe at home. He had a weak head and strong passions, which He who made him well knew, and for which He would undoubtedly make great allowance. The forgiveness of God is large and absolute; so large, that though in general He calls for confession

of our sins, He sometimes dispenses with that preliminary, and will not suffer even the delinquent himself to mention his transgression. He has so forgiven it, that He seems to have forgotten it too, and will have the sinner to forget it also. Such instances, perhaps, may not be common, but I know that there have been such, and it might be so with Nathan.

I know not what Johnson is about, neither do I now inquire. It will be a month to-morrow since I returned him the last proof. He might, I suppose, have published by this time, without hurrying himself into a fever, or breaking his neck through the violence of his dispatch. But having never seen the book advertised, I conclude that he has not. Had the parliament risen at the usual time, he would have been just too late, and though it sits longer than usual, or is likely to do so, I should not wonder if he were too late at last. Dr. Johnson laughs at Savage for charging the

still-birth of a poem of his upon the bookseller's delay; yet when Dr. Johnson had a poem of his own to publish, no man ever discovered more anxiety to meet the market. But I have taken thought about it, till I am grown weary of the subject, and at last have placed myself much at my ease upon the cushion of this one resolution, that if ever I have dealings hereafter with my present manager, we will proceed upon other terms.

Mr. Wright called here last Sunday, by whom Lord Dartmouth made obliging enquiries after the volume, and was pleased to say that he was impatient to see it. I told him that I had ordered a copy to his Lordship, which I hoped he would receive if not soon, at least before he should retire into the country. I have also ordered one to Mr. Barham.

We suffer in this country very much by drought. The corn, I believe, is in most places

thin, and the hay harvest amounts in some to not more than the fifth of a crop. Heavy taxes, excessive levies for the poor, and lean acres, have brought our farmers almost to their wits' end; and many, who are not farmers, are not very remote from the same point of despondency. I do not despond, because I was never much addicted to anxious thoughts about the future, in respect of temporals. But I feel myself a little angry with a minister, who, when he imposed a tax upon gloves, was not ashamed to call them a luxury. Caps and boots lined with fur, are not accounted a luxury in Russia, neither can gloves be reasonably deemed such in a climate sometimes hardly less severe than that. Nature, indeed, is content with little, and luxury seems, in some respect, rather relative, than of any fixed construction. Accordingly it may become, in time, a luxury for an Englishman to wear breeches, because it is possible to exist without them, and because persons of a

moderate income may find them too expensive. I hope, however, to be hid in the dust before that day shall come; for, having worn them so many years, if they be indeed a luxury, they are such a one as I could very ill spare; yet spare them I must, if I cannot afford to wear them.

We are tolerably well in health, and as to spirits, much as usual—seldom better, sometimes worse.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately

W. C.

END OF VOL. I.

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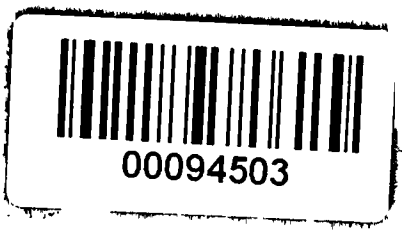
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